

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XVII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

FEW things are more notable
THE in recent Parliamentary history
CLOSURE. than the failure of the Closure.

When it was introduced by a Conservative Government, even those who found it convenient to criticise it as an infringement of the liberty of debate secretly recognised in it a beneficent instrument for forwarding business, public and private. Mr.



"ON THE POUNCE."

W. H. Smith took to its use with remarkable avidity. During his leadership, more especially in its earlier Sessions, he was, as Mr. Tim Healy irreverently put it, ever "on the pounce." The House soon grew familiar with the figure of its esteemed Leader sitting forward on the extreme edge of the Treasury Bench, with hands on his knees, his eye resting anxiously on the face of the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees. He waited thus till a moment favourable for interposing presented itself. Then, rising, he said, in a voice hardly raised above reverential whisper, "I move that the question be now put."

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Sometimes, not often, the Speaker refused to put the question. Whereat there were triumphant shouts of derision from the Irish camp. Mr. Smith's white teeth gleamed in responsive though spasmodic merriment, and he subsided for another hour. Then he was up again, unabashed by earlier rebuff, and, like the importunate widow in Scripture, he finally succeeded in bringing a particular episode to a conclusion.

With the return to power of a Liberal Ministry matters in this respect have distinctly changed. The horror of the Constitutional Party at the proposal to apply the Closure is so genuine and so passionate, that the present occupants of the Treasury Bench shrink from exciting it save under the greatest provocation. What was with Mr. W. H. Smith not even a choleric word is with Sir William Harcourt flat blasphemy. Moreover, some members on the Liberal side maintain whilst their friends are in office that objection to the Closure they expressed when in Opposition. There are two or three sitting below the Gangway on the Ministerial side who walk out without voting when a division on the Closure is challenged.



"WALKING OUT."

As far as I remember, Mr. Gladstone, whilst Leader of the House, moved the Closure only once, and that in circum-

stances of undisguised obstruction. Sir William Harcourt is not enamoured of the practice, and postpones its adoption as long as possible. Last Session the Closure was moved only thirty-six times, and of that number the Leader of the House was responsible for only six applications. Mr. John Morley moved it twice; Mr. Shaw-Lefevre and Mr. Herbert Gardner, in charge of Bills, severally on single occasions invoking the assistance of the Standing Order. Thus in the aggregate Ministers only ten times through the Session interfered with the object of bringing discussion to a close.

THE
SPEAKER
AND THE
CHAIRMAN
OF COM-
MITTEES.

Of the thirty-six motions, twenty were made whilst the Speaker was in the Chair and sixteen under the presidency of the Chairman of Committees. By a curious coincidence both right hon. gentlemen consented to put the question exactly half as many times as it was pressed upon them. The Speaker put the Closure ten times, and the Chairman of Committees eight. This proportion of consent goes a long way towards accounting for the gradual disuse of the Closure. When a member jumps up to move that the question be now put, and the Speaker declines to submit the proposal, a snub is inflicted the severity of which is not easily got over. For a Minister such a repulse is a serious matter, and right honourable gentlemen on the Treasury Bench invoke the Closure only when they are practically certain that the Speaker or the Chairman is prepared to submit the question.

That the President for the time being should be placed in a position of deciding whether the House or the Committee shall have the opportunity of saying whether or not it has heard enough of the current debate is the weak point in the scheme which has predestined it to failure. This stipulation was a concession to the well-meant objection on the part of an influential minority to take any step that tended to infringe freedom of debate. The duty is imposed upon the Speaker, but that does not lessen his dislike for it, nor incline him to take upon himself more responsibility than he can avoid. It is understood that the system Mr. Peel has laid down for his guidance in this matter* is not to submit the Closure as long as there is shown in any quarter of the House a disposition by a minority of respectable dimensions to continue the debate. This being known, or surmised, the control of events is in the

hands of adroit obstruction. It only requires that when one member sits down half-a-dozen others shall spring up, eager to catch the Speaker's eye, and the hapless Minister in charge of the Bill knows it would be useless for him to move the Closure.

Mr. Mellor has his plan, which is equally effective in minimizing the responsibility cast upon the Chair in this matter. The Chairman of Committees is understood to hold the view that if the Leader of the House, or the Minister in charge of a Bill, takes upon himself to move the Closure, the Chairman is bound forthwith to put the question. With private members he may be guided by circumstances. These plans, like Trochu's at the siege of Paris, are admirable in their way. But the nett result is that the Closure has practically become a dead letter.

This panacea from which so WHAT IS TO much was hoped, and which at BE DONE? the outset did passably well, having failed, the authorities are beginning to cast about for some new device. The business of the House of Commons increases every year, and as Session follows Session the inadequateness of the existing forms of procedure is demonstrated. When Mr. Chamberlain's friends were in office, he, going to the point in his usual direct and vigorous fashion, propounded a scheme whereby a certain specified time should be set apart for the discussion of particular stages of Bills, and when that was reached a division should automatically ensue. In Committee on the Irish Home Rule Bill in 1893, and again in Committee on the Budget Bill last Session, this suggestion was adopted by the Government. In the first case it resulted in the famous free fight on the floor of the House. In the second Mr. Chamberlain and the Opposition generally withdrew in high dudgeon, declaring that they would not even be passive participants in this attack on freedom of debate in the Mother of Parliaments.

These historical instances are cited to show how difficult is the question. There is all the difference of viewing it from the Opposition Benches and from those on the right hand of the Speaker. Nevertheless, the difficulty will have to be faced, and, probably, something will be heard at no distant time of a proposition to appoint a Committee representing all sections of Party in the House, which shall consider Government Bills when they are brought in, and decide what number of days shall be set aside for successive stages, the limit fixed by them, in no case, to be overstepped. Another suggestion made is

that there shall be a limit to the duration of speeches. This, at least, has the advantage of having been tested in practice, it being the only means by which some of the Congresses, meeting in various parts of the country, get through their work within reasonable time.

There is one eccentricity of Parliamentary procedure that might well be disposed of whilst weightier matters are being further cogitated. In the early days of municipal activity and private industrial enterprise it was found convenient to set aside the first half-hour of sittings of the House of Commons on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, to consider what is known as private business—that is to say, Bills promoted by corporations, public companies, or individuals. As the performance is (or should be) perfunctory, since this class of legislation comes before the House only after it has been thoroughly thrashed out in Select Committee, there were no restrictions as to the date or order in which promoters of private Bills might claim the attention of the House of Commons. A private member in charge of a measure disestablishing a Church, or extending the franchise, is obliged to take his chance at the ballot for opportunity of furthering his object. He may get a favourable position on the Order Book, or may fix on a date so remote as to preclude possibility of his Bill making headway in the current Session. But if the object of the measure he is concerned for be the making of a sewer, the provision of a local water supply, or the extension of a railway, he is absolutely master of the situation. He can put it down for any day he pleases, and the House of Commons will be obliged, not only to enter upon its discussion, but to set aside all other business till this local question has been talked out and, if necessary, divided upon.

At present, the Speaker takes the chair at three o'clock on the four days named. At half-past three public business commences, the interven-

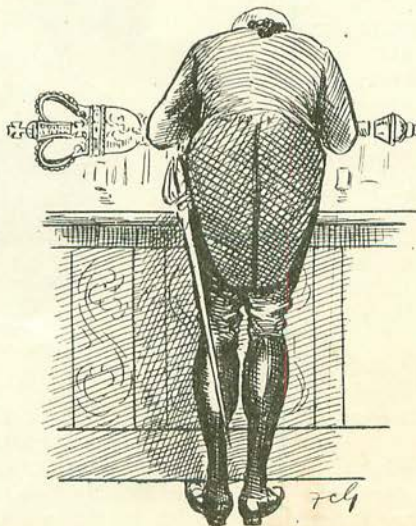
ing space having been devoted to private Bills, should there be any on the Orders. If not, the Speaker sits in the chair, the Clerks at the table, the Serjeant-at-Arms by the cross-benches, and members hang about waiting for the half-hour to strike. If, on the other hand, the report stage of a private Bill affecting keenly fought interests is down, discussion upon it may go on till five or six o'clock, or even later, public business, meanwhile, being shunted. Last Session the progress of the Budget was more than once seriously hampered by the incursion of a private Bill.

The existing arrangement was well enough when private business was limited in amount, and the House was content to accept the decision of its own Committee to which it had referred the inquiry, and which had probably spent some weeks in thoroughly sifting the matter. Now that a different order of things is established, it seems preposterous that the tyranny of private business should be permitted to prevail.

LORD DENMAN. Since the House of Lords met at the end of last Session a picturesque presence has vanished.

No longer will the gaunt figure of Lord Denman flit about the corridors of the House crowned with a plain-coloured skull cap, carrying in one hand a shabby hat, and in the other a stout stick. I never spoke to Lord Denman, though I was, for a long time previous to his death, the recipient of constant correspondence, written in his school-boy hand, evidently with a very bad pen.

This incomplete personal acquaintance began in odd fashion. Some years ago I wrote in one of the monthly magazines an article on the House of Lords. In the course of passing descriptions of peers, I alluded to Lord Denman as "a harmless, elderly gentleman, something of the Mr. Dick type." This, though not exactly complimentary, was not ill-naturedly meant, and so greatly pleased Lord Denman that he wrote to me saying he had bought up every



"THE SPEAKER TAKES THE CHAIR."



LORD DENMAN.

available copy of the magazine, and sent them to particular friends. One night he took the number down to the House and proposed to read the article, an opportunity of which, I regret to say, their lordships declined to avail themselves.

Looking over some notes made from time to time with respect to Lord Denman's public appearances, I find one of his many letters. It is a fair sample of the charming incoherency of style which suggested the reference to Mr. Dick. I do not remember what called forth this particular letter, but fancy from the context it refers to an occasion when Lord Denman insisted upon sitting with the Law Lords, actually joining in their deliberations on some important case, and delivering a separate judgment.

"Dear Mr. Lucy," he writes from the Midland Grand Hotel, under date 27th April, 1888, "I am glad that your journal states, even with a sneer, that the House of Lords cannot 'even repress me!' In 1884, the day of great Demonstration, the proposer of the Houses of Parliament said the great use of that demonstration would be the power to create Life Peers, and Dr. Carpenter (who died in a bath) and Dr. B. W. Richard should be the first L. P. I wish M.D.'s were made Hereditary Peers, but even Life Peers would find that 'My Lord' is expected to contribute to a great many charities and public objects.

"The 3 Life Peers might be Ld. C. Justices of C. P. in England and Ireland and L. C. Baron in England. There are 8 hereditary Law Lords—2 ex-Chancellors bound to

attend—L. Selborne, Herschell, Bramwell, Esher, Coleridge, Moncreiffe, Hobhouse, Halsbury.

"I wish the Committee on Reporting would examine me.—Yours truly,

"DENMAN.

"Dr. Richardson is a lengthy speaker. Mr. Atkinson, M.P. for Boston, presses his Bill on Duration of Speeches."

The member for Boston alluded MR. FARMER to in the postscript is the gentle- ATKINSON. man later known as Mr. Farmer

Atkinson. He was Lord Denman's great political and Parliamentary ally. Whilst he still sat in the Commons, Lord Denman was a frequent visitor to the lobby, where the twain held long consultations. They had struck up an alliance designed by its operations and influence to curb insolent majorities in either House, and to lower the crest of haughty Ministers. Lord Denman's favourite measure—he had quite a batch—was designed to extend the Parliamentary suffrage to women. Mr. Atkinson had drafted a Bill limiting the duration of speeches, a proposal much laughed at; but, as will appear from what is



MR. FARMER ATKINSON.

set forth in an earlier page, the member for Boston was apparently only ahead of his time. Lord Denman undertook, when the Bill had passed the Commons, to pilot it through the Lords, Mr. Atkinson on his part undertaking to carry through the

Commons: his noble friend's measure on woman's suffrage. As neither passed either House, there was no call to fulfil this mutual pledge. Still, the prospect led to many important and interesting colloquies between the two statesmen, regarded by the party Whips with gallant appearance of amusement.

LORD DENMAN had a short way with SCORES. poor Lord

Denman and his efforts to advance his Bills by a stage. Any peer may bring in a Bill, have it read a first time as a matter of course, and printed at the expense of the nation. This Lord Denman did Session after Session with his Woman's Suffrage Bill. But he never got it read a second time. What happened on such occasions was that some noble lord connected with the Government rose and moved that the Bill be read a second time on that day six months. No one showed a disposition to discuss the matter, and in a few moments the Bill was shelved.

Once Lord Denman had the best of this joke. In the Session of 1888, he early in the year brought on his Woman's Suffrage Bill. As usual, it was agreed to read it a second time on that day six months, a formula which confidently implied that when that period was reached Parliament would have been prorogued. It happened in this particular year that the Session was so prolonged that the House of Lords was still sitting six months after Lord Denman had moved his resolution. He had not forgotten the date, if others had. Upon its occurrence he rose, reminded their lordships that they had unanimously agreed on that very day to read his Bill a second time, and claimed fulfilment of the undertaking. The peers backed out of the situation, leaving Lord Denman with the second reading of his hapless Bill carefully relegated to that day three months, a date when it was more than ever certain the House would not be sitting.

When, next Session, he brought in the Bill, Lord Cranbrook made the usual motion.

Lord Denman, appearing at the table, said: "My Lords, will the noble Viscount state whether, in moving that the second reading shall be taken on this day six months, he means six lunar months or six calendar months?"

There is nothing like being precise, and the few days' difference between an aggregation of six lunar or six calendar months might make all the difference in his chance of finding the House again sitting.

Lord Salisbury was ROUSED. bury when

Premier was, perhaps, a little peremptory with a weaker brother. If Lord Denman rose with another peer and declined to give way, Lord Salisbury promptly moved that the other peer be heard. When the Small Holdings Bill of 1892 came on for consideration on third reading, Lord

Denman moved its rejection. At the end of ten minutes Lord Salisbury, interposing, declared that his remarks, inaudible on most benches, had no bearing on the Bill before the House. The crushed worm will turn at last. Lord Denman had frequently suffered from the impatience of the Premier.



LORD CRANBROOK.



LORD SALISBURY'S ATTITUDE.

He now turned on Lord Salisbury, and personally rated him for some moments, concluding by striking the table with clenched

fist and resuming his seat, whilst Lord Salisbury stonily stared into space across the table.

Lord Denman was a profound student of Parliamentary precedents, and occasionally flashed one upon the Lords, whose novelty disturbed their habitual and well-trained imperturbability. When Mr. Ritchie's Local Government Bill, coming up from the Commons, had been grudgingly passed by their lordships, Lord Denman brought in a Bill for its repeal. This courageous effort met with the customary fate. Its introduction was not refused, and the Bill was printed. But a second reading was curtly refused.

There was supposed to be an end of the matter. But a few nights later Lord Denman came up smiling with another Bill, designed to effect the purpose of the first. He admitted that this course was unusual. But he had found a precedent in the year 1754 connected with an Act for the naturalization of the Jews. "I have been thirty-four years in this House," he added, parenthetically, "and am entitled to speak in every month except October."

Why October, the peers, being after all human, were curious to know. But they mastered the weakness and sat silent, whilst Lord Denman, raising his musical

voice to tones of passionate entreaty, besought them in the name of the liberties of England to read his Bill a first time.

What followed illustrates the difference of habit on the part of the Lords and Commons in dealing with cases like this. Had Lord Denman risen upon such an errand in the Commons, he would have been greeted with uproarious laughter and cheering, the scene closing by the stern interference of the Speaker. In the Lords he talked on amid perfect silence till he had quite finished. Then the Lord Chancellor, taking no more notice of him than if he had been a blue-bottle fly buzzing round the chandelier, went on with the next business.

His last interposition in the business of the House of Lords was most dramatic. The peers to the number of twenty or thirty were discussing some Bill, the name of which does not dwell in the memory. Suddenly appeared in their midst the tall, gaunt figure of Lord Denman, with skull cap on his head, his left hand clutching a bundle of papers, his right pointing to the Front Bench above the gangway, where ex-Ministers sit.

"My Lords," he said, interrupting the peer who was in possession of the House, "there are no Bishops present. I move that this House do now adjourn."

No notice was taken of the interruption, and after a while Lord Denman, gathering up his papers, hurried from the House. Other peers might discuss miscellaneous Bills in the absence of the Bishops. He would not share their responsibility.



"THERE ARE NO BISHOPS PRESENT."

MY The wide
LETTER- range of
BOX. THESTRAND
MAGAZINE
over the English-speaking world brings me letters from various parts, near and remote, following up topics here touched upon. One writes from Bombay: "Passing through London on my way to five years' exile, I spent a night in the House of Commons, and was much com-

forted. It may at times be dull here, but for absolute, soul-depressing dullness, I never saw anything like the centre of attraction for denizens of a scattered Empire. When, from month to month, I read 'From Behind the Speaker's Chair,' I wonder that you, who seem to spend your days and nights in the House, still survive. Are you not really bored to death? Is not flesh a weariness and the grasshopper a burden?"

We have no grasshoppers in the House of Commons, though last Session a mouse looked in and momentarily concentrated upon itself the attention of a crowded Legislature. Towards the end of a prolonged Session—and



"A GRASSHOPPER."

last August, with brief intermission, the House of Commons counted twenty months' hard labour—things don't look so bright as they did. But for a sufficiently good reason the House of Commons never palls upon me beyond the influence of a passing hour of dreariness. The reason is that, like the sea, it is never to be counted upon for prolongation of a particular mood or a current aspect. At one moment it may be in a condition depicted by the disappointed visitor on his way to Bombay. The next it may break forth into a burst of merry laughter; may be moved to enthusiastic cheering or shouts of execration; may even be lashed into a state of tumult such as that which made memorable a night in June in the Home Rule Session of 1893. At its best the House of Commons in dramatic qualities exceeds any Assembly in the world. At its worst it is, in truth, deadly dull. But even in the depths of dulness, the seeing eye may discern some touch of human interest.

Here is a note from Mr. Archibald Forbes, whose knowledge is extensive and peculiar. It relates to a House of Commons' story, told in a former number, wherein a Conservative member, living in Whitehall Court, endeavoured to obtain permission to drive through the Horse Guards archway. According to the smoking-room story, he was told that that was impossible, the privilege being reserved for Royalty and a few highly-placed personages connected with the War Office. But he might be made an Irish peer.

"The actual story," writes Mr. Forbes, "is of the George III. period. Robert Smith, the banker, and ancestor of the present Lord Carrington, had a house whose back, with the usual garden in front of it, faced the Green Park on its eastern side. He desired to have an entrance into the park from his garden, and petitioned the King to that effect through the proper channel. 'I cannot grant him this privilege,' said old George, 'but I shall be very glad to make him an Irish peer instead.' So Smith became Lord Carrington in the Irish peerage, and a year later received a peerage of U.K."

Another correspondent on the same subject writes to say that he first heard the story twenty-seven years ago.

LORD BROUGHAM'S CHECK TROUSERS. Mr. William Lincolne sends from Ely a note which seems to settle an important controversy. Was the Brobdingnagian check pattern of Lord Brougham's trousers a figment of the fancy of Mr. *Punch*, or did they actually exist? Says Mr. Lincolne:—

"Among his lordship's enthusiastic admirers was a Huddersfield manufacturer, who, having turned out a remarkably good shepherd's plaid trousering, sent him a piece with compliments. He had a pair of trousers made from it, and when these were worn out, having the cloth still by him, he just had another pair, and so on to the end of his days. My informant, a friend of thirty-five years' standing, was a Huddersfield man, and what may be still more to the purpose, I saw his lordship wearing a pair during what must have been his last public appearance on a platform at Newcastle some time in the sixties. He was then a mild-mannered, genial old gentleman, and as I listened to his old man's saws, it was hard to believe he could ever have been the fiery advocate of Queen Caroline, the indomitable Henry Brougham! *Sed quantum mutatus ab illo.*

"The enormous pattern was just the 'touch of exaggeration essential to success in caricature,' but the basis was shepherd's plaid."

THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE.

It seems a quite unnecessary task to impose upon the over-burdened Speaker the necessity of waiting about to whatever hour of night or morning may be necessary in order to declare the adjournment of the House of Commons. When the House is in Committee upon a large and intricate measure, such as the Home Rule Bill

or the Budget Bill, the Chairman of Committees takes the chair immediately after questions are disposed of—that is, between four and five in the afternoon—and remains at his post till midnight. Thereupon, under existing rules, progress is reported, the Chairman leaves the chair, the Speaker is brought in, and the Chairman, standing by the steps of the chair, reports progress. As with certain exceptions no opposed business may be taken after midnight, all the Speaker has to do is to run through the orders of the day (that is, to read the list of Bills put down for the sitting), and, these being severally postponed, the House is adjourned within a space of five minutes.

“Why,” common persons would inquire, “should the Speaker, in such circumstances, not be free for the whole of the evening—at liberty to go to bed when he pleases?” The reason is the uncertainty of what may momentarily arise in the House of Commons. Not only does the Speaker await the midnight call to proceed to the adjournment, but he does not feel himself at liberty to leave his House all through the long hours the Committee is pegging away under the presidency of the Chairman.

The necessity for this hard-and-fast line was demonstrated on the occasion of the great fight on the Closure in Committee on the Home Rule Bill. That sprang up like a whirlwind. Had the Speaker not been within call when a messenger was sent to summon him, a deplorable scene must have reached still lower depths.

As it was, the call was so sudden and the hurry so urgent, that when the Speaker took the chair he had no definite knowledge of the circumstances that led up to the tumult, a condition of things Mr. Peel, with his customary presence of mind and infinite skill, put to ready use. When members showed a disposition to go back on what had immediately followed upon the interruption of Mr. Chamberlain’s speech, the Speaker said he had no information on the subject, and declined to permit discussion.

That was an exceptional case; but it is an exception which achieves the customary function of proving the rule. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the Speaker might finally retire from the scene when the House resumes Committee on a big Government Bill. On the hundredth his return to the chair is imperatively needed.



From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XVIII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

A NEW HOUSE FOR THE COMMONS. THE Select Committee of the House of Commons, which last year, under the presidency of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, considered whether any and what arrangements might be made to improve the accommodation provided for members and officials of the House, and for the representatives of the Press, shrank from a larger question submitted. It was proposed that evidence should be taken with regard to moderate enlargement of the existing Chamber and its galleries. On a division, this was negatived, and the Committee proceeded to recommend certain tinkering, duly carried out during the recess.

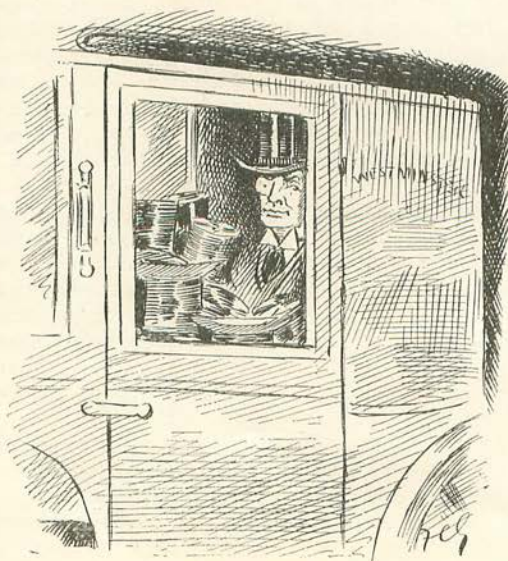
The question of a new House for the Commons comes up with unfailing regularity with every new Parliament. There is no doubt that, for the greater number of working nights in a Session, the accommodation of the present Chamber is more than ample. It is true that, knowing the Assembly when fully constituted comprises 658 members, a Chamber was deliberately built to seat 306. Beyond this, accommodation is provided in the galleries for an additional 122 members. This is well enough for gentlemen in the front row, but those in the rear can see very little and hear not much. Within the last few years, whilst the number of members has been increased to 670, accommodation for them in the galleries has

been considerably reduced by the enlargement of the Press Gallery.

Whilst, even in these conditions, "PEGGING-OUT CLAIMS." the Chamber is big enough for its ordinary purposes, there are occasions when inexorable limits of space assert themselves. The most recent example of extreme inconvenience arose on the introduction of the Home Rule Bill in the Session of 1892. As early as five in the morning members presented themselves, and by means of visiting-cards or hats allotted particular seats. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Whip of the Liberal Unionist Party, was reported to have driven into Palace Yard in a four-wheeler filled with second-hand hats, which he arranged on the benches below the gangway, "pegging-out claims" on behalf of his friends. Dr. Tanner having exhausted all available stock of hats, literally took off his coat, as Mr. Parnell once conditionally promised to do, and attempted to establish a claim for the seat it covered. That,

however, went beyond all Parliamentary precedent, and the claim was disallowed. Colonel Saunderson, coming in a little late (though seven o'clock had not yet sounded from Big Ben), finding a strange hat on his accustomed seat, with rare absence of mind sat down upon it.

The general result of the arrangement was so undesirable that at subsequent critical stages of the Bill the



UNIONIST HATS.



A SARTORIAL SACRIFICE.

Speaker gave orders that the doors of the House were not to be unlocked till noon, a restriction which chiefly had the result of postponing the scrimmage by six or seven hours. By way of increasing the accommodation, chairs were brought in and planted in double row down the floor. Not more than twenty could be so disposed of, and what were they among so many, clamorous for seats?

IN AS FAR BACK
PALMER- as 1867,
STON'S TIME the present
Houses of

Parliament having then been in occupation for thirty-four years, it was felt that something must be done to improve and, if possible, enlarge their accommodation. In the debates of the closing years of this the Palmerston Parliament, there will be found many conversations on the subject. One suggestion which met with general favour was that the walls separating the House from the division lobbies which encircle it should be re-

moved and the space added to the Chamber. This attractive proposal was dropped upon discovery that the roof of the Chamber is supported upon the inner walls, and that in order to obtain the space devoted to the lobbies the House would practically have to be rebuilt. Another scheme provided that the walls at either end of the Chamber, under the clock and behind the Speaker's Chair, should be removed. It was estimated that this would provide additional seating accommodation for a hundred persons. Whether they would be able to hear or see is another matter.

The late Sir Thomas Bazley, at the time member for Manchester, fresh from morning service at the Tabernacle, propounded still another scheme. Behind the side galleries of the House there are corridors corresponding with the division lobbies below. Mr. Bazley (not yet Sir Thomas) proposed that these lobbies should be appropriated, the galleries of the House being extended backward till they reached the outward walls. This, he triumphantly affirmed, would give sitting room for 200 more members. It was clear that these might as well be seated within the Tabernacle itself as far as ability to follow current debate was concerned.

A C O M-
MR. BARRY'S mittee was
PLAN. appointed
in 1867

with instructions to consider the whole question of the accommodation of the House. The main result was to formulate a notable plan for a new House of Commons, which caught on at the time, but has long rested forgotten in the archives of the House. It was the work of Mr. Barry, son of the architect of the Palace of Westminster, and was unanimously adopted by the Committee as providing an increase



ABSENCE OF MIND.

of accommodation in a most satisfactory manner, without involving interruption of Sessional proceedings.

I have before me a copy of the plan, certainly the best and the most practicable of a cloud of suggestions. It implies nothing more

nor less than the erection of a new House in the court adjoining the existing Chamber, known as the Commons' Court. It provides a statelier Chamber than the present, with the usual accessories for division lobbies, corridors, reading-rooms, dining-rooms, smoking-rooms, private rooms for members of the Ministry and officials, and enlarged accommodation for the Press. The new House would seat 569 members, for 419 of whom places would be found on the floor. There would be sitting room for 330 strangers, making a total of 899 persons, increasing the accommodation for members, as compared with the present House, by 141 seats, and for strangers by something like fifty.

In the present House the average width of each seat is $20\frac{2}{3}$ in. In the new House the width of seat room provided per member would be 20 in. The shape of the proposed Chamber is octagonal, with four long and four shorter sides. Its dimensions are 67 ft. by 63 ft., and as it would be 39 ft. high, it would contain 154,300 cubic feet of space. The present Chamber is 68 ft. by 44 ft., and is 44 ft. high, containing 127,000 cubic feet of space.

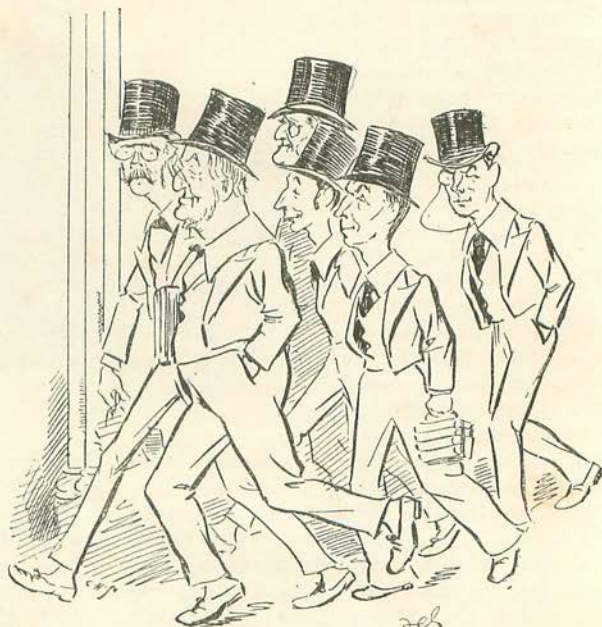
THE SECRET OF THE CEILING.

A feature in Mr. Barry's plan which strongly recommended it to the Committee was that not only would it leave the existing Chamber undisturbed during the process of erection, and available for the sittings of the House, but when completed would utilize the present Chamber as a handsome adjunct. Last year I incidentally mentioned—what is a secret to nine-tenths, not only of visitors to the House of Commons, but of members—that the glass roof, illuminated at night, which canopies the House of Commons is not part of the original plan. When the Speaker first took the Chair in the new House of Commons, members were seated under a splendid roof, on which had been lavished the fulness of master masons' art. It soon became clear that this lofty ceiling, with its delicate chisel-work, its noble arches, and its dark recesses, was the sepulchre of speech. Here the sound of the human voice was buried, giving up the ghost amid inarticulate rumbling. The House of Lords was finished off with a roof of similar character and proportions. It remains to this day, and there are

not more than a dozen peers who can, without effort, make themselves heard throughout the Chamber. The Commons, more utilitarian, decided that, after all, speeches were more precious than the roof; a conclusion which perhaps will not be generally accepted in its entirety. The ceiling was lowered by the construction of the existing glass, the intervening space between the false ceiling and the true one coming in useful for lighting and ventilating purposes. The result was that the Chamber, at one time as difficult to speak in as is the House of Lords to-day, was transformed into a hall whose acoustical properties are unrivalled.

It was part of Mr. Barry's plan that the present House, with the glass ceiling removed and the splendid roof restored to the light of day, should be used as an approach to the new House, and as a private lobby for members. Within it would be provided post-office accommodation and rooms for the Whips, Ministerial and Opposition. Amongst other attractive details of the scheme was a refreshment room for the use alike of Lords and Commons, with a frontage to the river. Mr. Barry, probably with the sanguine temperament constitutional with architects, estimated that the new buildings might be erected at an outlay not exceeding £120,000.

THE OLD, OLD STORY. A Select Committee having been specially appointed to consider the question of a new House for



SCHOOLBOYS.

the Commons, and having unanimously recommended a particular scheme, it would seem that the next thing to do was to vote the money and get to work on the building. That is an anticipation that discloses only superficial knowledge of the House of Commons' habitude. Oftener than not the appointment of a Select Committee, or of a Royal Commission, is nothing more than a device deliberately to shelve a troublesome question. More than twenty-seven years have passed since this painstaking and prolonged inquiry was concluded. Nothing has in the meantime been done in the way of carrying out its definite, almost peremptory, recommendations. Last Session there was a slight recurrence of the unrest of members in view of their inadequate accommodation. Invariably at the opening of a new Parliament, when the withers of members are unwrung and they flock down to Westminster with the eagerness of boys admitted to a new playground, there is fresh outcry for a new House. But it dies away as the Session grows older, and the old Chamber, in which Peel has sat, Palmerston has slept, Disraeli has manœuvred, and Gladstone has thundered, still serves.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, STEEPLECHASE. The return to Parliamentary life of Mr. Elliott Lees suggests the possibility of re-establishing the House of Commons' Steeplechases. These were started in the Session of 1889, when, after a memorable race, Mr. Lees, then member for Oldham, rode in first amongst the light weights, repeating his victory in the following year. Mr. Cyril Flower, now Lord Battersea, actually came in first on a horse, understood to have been named "Home Rule." The circumstance that one of the Liberal Whips had ridden past the winning post on "Home Rule" was regarded at the time by adherents of that policy as a good omen. It turned out that there had been a mistake. It was not "Home Rule," but quite another horse, one disqualified by earlier achievements, which Mr. Flower had ridden. He was accordingly

disqualified, and to this day in his Dorset home Mr. Elliott Lees dines under the shadow of the huge silver cup, prize of the House of Commons' Steeplechase, none daring to make him afraid.

One circumstance calculated to UNHORSE, militate against inclination to re-establish this festival is the notable Parliamentary mortality marked in the cases of the riders in this race. Of a dozen whose names I remember, a very small proportion escaped the perils of the General Election. Only three—Mr. Bromley-Davenport, Mr. Muntz, and Mr. Frank Mildmay—rode in at the memorable struggle at the polls in the autumn of 1892. For the rest, one, Mr. Fitzwilliam, died; Mr. Cyril Flower ascended to the House of Lords, where he now beams as Lord Battersea; Mr. Western Jarvis, the most active promoter and manager of the steeplechase, did not offer himself for re-election at the General Election, an example followed by Mr. Bazley White. Of the rest, Mr. Elliott Lees, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Hermon-Hodge, Mr. Raymond Heath, and Mr. A. Pease were defeated at the poll. Mr. Walter Long got in at a by-election, and Mr. Elliott Lees has now joined him.

Dick Power never rode in any of the steeplechases which followed each other in regular succession from 1889 to 1892. But he took a keen interest in the proceedings, and at the time his earthly race was all too early closed had missed none of the House of Commons' events. Mr. Alfred Pease won the race in 1891. Mr. Frank Mildmay delighting an honest hunting constituency by winning the cup in 1892, a distinction which, as mentioned, did not at the General Election save his seat in quite another mount.

WILLIAM THE SILENT. It is piquant to hear complaints made of the taciturnity of Sir William Harcourt in his capacity of Leader of the House of Commons following upon his placid enjoyment of a hermit recess. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might well retort, in the words of the corporal administering an ordered



MR. ELLIOTT LEES, M.P.

bout of punishment to a peccant private: "Hit high or hit low, I can't please you." Time was when complaint of his manner on the Opposition Benches was directed against his, alleged, too-frequent interposition in debate. Now he is accused of provoking brevity, of contemptuous abstention from participation in debate. Speak much or speak little, he fails to please.

It is quite true that Sir William Harcourt's Parliamentary custom of to-day varies in marked manner from what it used to be, even so recently as the Session of 1893. But a great deal has happened since then. He is now Leader of the House of Commons, responsible for getting its work through. To that end he knows there is no contribution more valuable than habitual flashes of silence. The House of Commons is prone to find the key-note of its passing mood on the Treasury Bench. If the Leader is talkative, it will cheerfully respond. If he is concise, it refrains from garrulity. When, on the final day of July last year, Sir William Harcourt moved the Time Closure with the object of getting the Evicted Tenants Bill through, he, to Mr. Arthur Balfour's measureless amazement, his quite uncontrollable indignation, spoke for only five minutes.

"Never in the history of Parliament," Mr. Balfour, with clenched hands and flashing eyes, cried aloud, "has such a proposal been made in so brief a speech."

That was true; but long before midnight debate was brought to a conclusion, and the extra hour which another leader might have occupied in spinning phrases over a foregone conclusion was utilized to pass the report stage of a batch of Supply.

Sir William Harcourt's plan of campaign as Leader of the House of Commons is avowedly based on a study of Mr. Disraeli's manner whilst he occupied the same position. The member for Oxford in the Parliament of 1874 was, in spite of political differences, on terms of personal intimacy with the Conser-

vative chief. They said many good things to each other. One of Disraeli's apothegms falling on attentive ears lives in practice at this day. "A successful Leader of the House of Commons," said Mr. Disraeli, "should, in degree, order his procedure by the nursery formula for the direction of a child admitted to the company of his elders. He should be seen, but not heard."

That was a principle faithfully carried into practice by its promulgator. He was the most patient and the most constant attendant on the business of the House. However dull might be the proceedings, he was there to watch their course. Hour after hour he sat with arms folded, legs crossed—"Like a Crusader on a tombstone," Beresford-Hope, who did not unreservedly admire him, once spitefully, but *sotto voce*, observed—head bent down, eyes that seemed to sleep, but missed no movement in any part of the House. Whole pages of *Hansard*, covering successive nights of a Session during his leadership, may be glanced over without evidence of his presence beyond an answer extracted from him at question time. His idea was that the Leader of the House of Commons should occupy something of the position of editor on a well-regulated newspaper.

It is that able person's business to get the best possible work out of his staff, confining his own labour to inspiration, direction, and revision. Disraeli, holding his colleagues responsible for the affairs of their several departments, let them speak for them in the House of Commons.

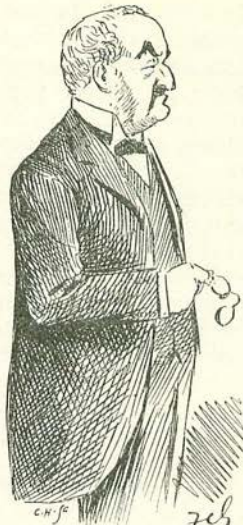
AN EXTREME CASE. This principle was sorely tried when, in the Session of 1876, Sir Charles Adderley, as President of the Board of Trade, had charge of the Merchant Shipping Bill. Rarely has such a muddle been seen since Parliaments began. It culminated in the famous

episode when Mr. Plimsoll broke out and, as was written at the time, stood on one leg on the floor of the House and shook his fist at the Speaker. After that, poor Sir Charles



INDIGNATION.

Adderley was obviously impossible. Still, the Premier scrupulously refrained from any overt act of super-session. Only Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir John Holker, then Attorney-General, were told off to sit, one on either side of him, through the long nights when the Bill was in Committee. With their aid the Bill, wholly transformed, passed through the House, and as soon as possible, having due regard to



LORD NORTON.

decency, Sir Charles Adderley was made a peer, with the title of Lord Norton.

It is little wonder that Mr. W. H. H. Smith, who, regarded as a Minister, was almost literally "brought up by hand" in the Disraeli nursery, should, when he came to be Leader of the House, remember his old master's lessons. Though in no other-wise comparable with Parliamentary giants of his own or other days, Mr. Smith was, undoubtedly, one of the most successful Leaders the House has known. Like Mr. Disraeli, he was always on the spot. If not actually on the Treasury Bench, whence he was rarely missed, he was in his room, within sound of the division bell or call of the messenger. Also like the Master, he appreciated the relative value of speech and silence. Though the Leader of the House may strategically refrain from lengthening debate by interposing speeches in supplement of the Minister in charge of Bill or motion, it is (or was) expected of him that he should wind up the debate. In times when Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone faced each other across the table, no important debate was concluded till the Leader of the Opposition had delivered a set speech, and the Leader of the House had elaborately replied.

Mr. Smith invariably excused himself from observance of this custom. Mr. Gladstone, as Leader of the Opposition, might fire a parting volley into a passing Bill. The Leader of the House left the duty of replying to the Minister in charge of the measure, he

sitting applausive by his side. This habit led to abatement of excitement as compared with the immediate preparation for an important division in earlier days. But the division took place a little earlier, and the practical result, as far as figures went, was precisely the same.

Mr. Gladstone, whether as Leader of the House or as Leader of the Opposition, differed wholly from the model set up by his long-time rival. So restless was his energy, so minute his knowledge, so boundless his vocabulary, that, even to the last, he found it impossible to abstain from taking the lead in whatever debate went forward. Had Mr. Disraeli, in the process of evolution, found himself Leader of a Government pledged to the Home Rule Bill, and had he had a Chief Secretary so capable and enthusiastic as Mr. John Morley, he would, have left the direct charge of the Bill to his colleague, holding himself in reserve, as Napoleon was wont to hold the Imperial Guard. It was reported at the opening of the Session that, whilst the Premier would personally introduce the Bill, he would thereafter, more especially in Committee, leave its conduct to Mr. Morley. Perhaps, being constitutionally of a sanguine mood, he thought that was possible. When put to the test, he found irresistible the temptation to be ever in his place through Committee, watchful, alert, convincing out of all proportion to necessity, replying to a captious nonentity with as painstaking precision and force of argument as he answered Mr. Balfour or Mr. Goschen.

In his translation of the "Odes of Horace," a work completed, I believe, before sunset on the very day he resigned the Premiership, Mr. Gladstone expresses the opinion that "the translation of Horace should carry compression to the farthest practicable point." That is a principle he reserved for the classics and denied to the Commons. Through the prolonged debate on the Home Rule Bill of 1893, as the Premier pounced upon some immaterial person below the gangway and rent his assertion to shreds, one often thought of the eagle catching flies. It was magnificent, but it was not war. Frequently the direct effect of the Premier's interposition was to revive a flagging debate and postpone by an hour or an evening a division which, had he restrained himself, might forthwith have been taken. Sir William Harcourt has had the advantage of personally studying both manners of conduct-



MR. GLADSTONE AND THE FLY.

ing business in the House of Commons. Observation of the Gladstonian has confirmed his conviction of the sounder principle that underlies the Disraelian.

IRISH MEMBERS ; OLD STYLE. The most notable feature in the thirteenth Parliament of Queen Victoria, as far as it has gone, is the self-effacement of the Irish members. Peers who chanced to sit in the Parliaments of 1874 or 1880, looking in now on the old familiar scene, scarcely recognise it. In those days no debate was complete without contributions from at least a dozen of the Irish members. A case that occurs to the mind dates back just eighteen years. The Government had brought in a Bill proposing the Federation of the South African Colonies ; this was a subject, it was reasonable to suppose, not specially attractive for the Irish members. That assumption only showed how limited, at the time, was knowledge of the possibilities of Irish eloquence. The House having got into Committee on the South African Bill, the formal motion that the preamble be postponed was made. Thereupon Mr. O'Donnell blandly interposed. There followed a scene in which Mr. Parnell had "his words taken down," and a condition of affairs supervened which culminated in a sitting of twenty-six hours. That has been beaten since, but it was thought much of at the time.

NEW STYLE. Since those days the capacity of the Irish member, apparently without an hour's preparation, to talk on any subject that comes uppermost, has been frequently vindicated. In the Salisbury Parliament, which preceded that now sitting, they, falling more into line with the regular Opposition, moderated their oratorical ardour. Since the General Election of 1892 returned

Mr. Gladstone to power with the Home Rule flag nailed to the Ministerial mast, the Irish members have developed an almost uncanny ability to forego speech-making. To the ordinary representative of Irish Nationalist politics, this vow of silence must be a severe discipline. What it must be for Mr. W. O'Brien, Mr. T. Healy, and, above all, for Mr. Sexton, no tongue can tell and few imaginations can conceive. To sit silent night after night, week after week, whilst others talk at large, is an ordeal the patient standing of which testifies to possession of high courage and marvellous self-command.

A SAFETY VALVE. During the debates on the Home Rule Bill, Mr. Healy hit upon a plan which Mr. Arthur Balfour, whilst not approving, admitted was desirable from the point of view of a safety valve. When any particularly provocative speech was made against the Bill, Mr. Healy punctuated its delivery with more or less pertinent remarks. It is an ordinary habit of members to jot down comment or criticism, as they suggest themselves in listening to a speech they propose to answer. Mr. Healy, in accordance with the Irish Parliamentary Plan of Campaign, did not propose to answer anyone by set speech. It was, therefore, no use jotting down observations as they occurred to him. Accordingly he let them fly forthwith, a proceeding which, though not lacking in interest, was somewhat embarrassing even to so practised a speaker as Mr. Balfour. Still, he recognised a certain utility in the habit, since, as he put it, there was every prospect of the hon. gentleman bursting if it were not for this safety valve of exclamation.

MR. W. O'BRIEN. Mr. O'Brien, who up to the epoch of the Boulogne expedition was one of the most prominent and most passionate participants in debate, now finds it possible to sit through a long evening without uttering a sentence. He somewhat unexpectedly broke silence last Session, interposing in debate arising out of the conflict between Lords and Commons on the Evicted Tenants Bill. It was interesting to note how with withdrawal from practice he seems to have lost his former hold on the House. Even when — perhaps because when — he faced an assembly the vast majority of which was angrily hostile, he has commanded its attention, sometimes controlled its conviction, by the strength of his argument and the power of his eloquence. The transformation in these respects marked by his carefully-

prepared speech on the Evicted Tenants Bill was painfully notable.

THE
HARDEST
CASE
OF ALL.

Of all Irish members this spell of comparative silence is most remarkable in Mr. Sexton. For some years he did his best to spoil his own reputation. With the Irish question in all its phases at his finger-ends, a keen debater, a felicitous phrase-maker, capable on occasion of rising to heights of genuine eloquence, he swamped himself and his audience in floods of immeasurable verbosity. Under the new condition of affairs, pledged not to assist the Opposition in the design he and his friends alleged against them of

indefinitely postponing Home Rule by talking against time, he, above all men, was bound to circumscribe the number and the length of his speeches. The undesigned consequence has been most beneficial. Of late, his contributions to debate, rare in number and condensed in bulk, have been listened to with pleasure and approval by crowded Houses. To influence votes in the House of Commons by speech-making has long been recognised as beyond the range of custom, if not of possibility. Mr. Sexton's speeches, in his later and better manner, if they have not achieved the impossible, have not infrequently at least influenced the course of debate.



VOWS OF SILENCE.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XIX.

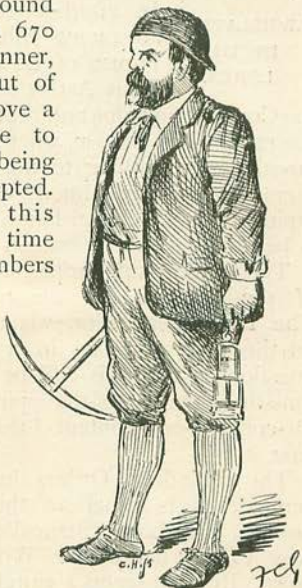
(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THERE was a report current COURT DRESS. at the beginning of the present

Parliament that the Speaker, commiserating the lot of members who for various reasons were not disposed to endow themselves with Court dress, proposed to give a series of supplementary feasts at which ordinary dinner dress would serve. The rumour may be dismissed without a moment's consideration. The Speaker is not likely, voluntarily, to divest himself of one of the conditions which temper his official hospitality. It suffices to be bound to invite in turn 670 gentlemen to dinner, without going out of the way to remove a possible obstacle to the invitation being universally accepted. Accordingly, this Session, as from time immemorial, members dining with the Speaker have been required to don Court dress and carry a sword by their side, when it is not between somebody else's legs.

So inexorable is this law, that last Session it operated to the extent of banishing the seconder of the Address from the Speaker's table. It is the invariable custom that the mover and seconder of the Address shall be invited to the dinner to Her Majesty's Ministers with which the Speaker hospitably opens the Session. Last year Mr. Fenwick, whose honourable boast it is that he commenced his career as a working collier, seconded the Address. He undertook the duty only upon condition that he should not be called upon to array himself in military, naval, or Court dress, as is the quaint custom of the occasion. The point was yielded as far as his appearance in the House of Commons was concerned. But the Speaker, tied and bound by immemorial custom, did not see his way to vary the usages of the Ministerial dinner.

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MR. FENWICK (AS HE MIGHT HAVE APPEARED).

Accordingly, whilst the mover of the Address, arrayed in the martial costume of a major in the Militia, dined with the nobility and gentry at Speaker's Court, the seconder, clad in sober black, humbly ate his chop at home.

From their earliest departure on the war-path the Irish members have made a point of standing aloof from the Speaker's dinner parties. There is, indeed, a story of the late Mr. Joseph Gillis Biggar having been encountered on the top of a Clapham 'bus with velvet coat on his back, ruffles at his wrist, black stockings coyly hiding his shapely legs, silver buckles on his shoes, and sword in dainty scabbard hanging within easy reach of his right hand. Questioned as to the occasion for this disguise, he airily replied: "I've been dining with Mr. Speaker." This is, however, only one of the many myths that linger round the memory of honest Joseph Gillis. As upon another apocryphal occasion it was announced that "the Tenth never dance," so it remains true to this day that the Irish members never dine—at least, not with the Speaker.

Shortly after Mr. Bright, in 1868, joined the Ministry as President of the Board of Trade, the clothes difficulty presented itself. His Quaker conscience revolted against the necessity of assuming the semi-warlike costume which forms the full dress of Her Majesty's Ministers. To prance around in scarlet coat, with gold lace down his trousers and a plumed cocked hat under his arm, was a sacrifice that seemed too much, even as a preliminary condition of being enabled to serve his country. But the uni-



"HE DREW THE LINE AT THE SWORD."

form is imperatively necessary in connection with Court duties inseparable from Ministerial office. On visits to the Queen, attendance at the Prince of Wales's levées, and at the Ministerial dinners in Speaker's Court, the integrity of the British Constitution demands a certain strictly ordered uniform. After some protest, Mr. Bright gave in in the matters of coat and trousers, even of plumed hat. But he drew the line at the sword. Finally concession was made on this point, he alone of all Her Majesty's Ministers appearing on ceremonial occasions unembarrassed by a sword.

THE DIRECTION OF UNCERTAINTY. It is said that fewer new members have possessed themselves of Court dress in the present Parliament than in any of its predecessors of recent times. The

reason for that lies on the surface. When the present Parliament began business, there were some authorities who confidently asserted that dissolution would fall upon it before it had enjoyed its first Easter holiday. When nothing happened at Easter, the date of the prophecy was shifted to the Committee stage of the Home Rule Bill. When nothing happened then, other occasions, none remote, were with equal confidence named. Whether immediately, or by-and-by, Parliament could not last long, and what was to become of the new member, thrown upon the country with a brand-new suit of Court dress and no certainty of being returned at another election? The situation, it is said, appealed with peculiar force to Scottish members; only those with majorities so large as to justify expectation of opportunity of wearing out their Court dress in a subsequent Parliament adventuring on the expenditure.

One peculiar distinction between the Lords and Commons is the

greater jealousy with which the latter guard the sanctity of their Chamber. Both Houses have staffs of messengers, chiefly responsible as media of communication between members and the outer world. But whilst messengers in the Lords, charged with a letter, a card, or a Ministerial box, may approach the person addressed and achieve his errand, a messenger in the House of

Commons may not approach beyond the bar at one end, or proceed further than the steps of the Speaker's Chair at the other. The consequences are inconvenient and sometimes ludicrous. What happens is that the messenger, standing by the cross benches, hands to the nearest member the message or card with which he is charged, and it is slowly passed along the line till it reaches its destination; each member in turn thinking it is meant for him, occasionally an absent-minded statesman opening a letter not addressed to him. This is a matter in which the Lords are certainly more up to date, and the Commons might well take a leaf out of their ordinarily despised book.

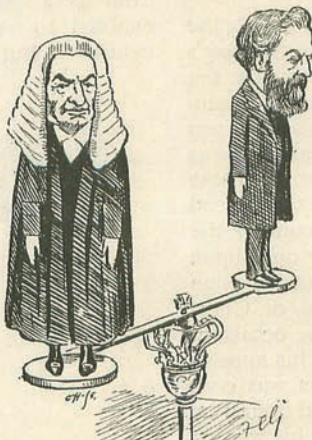
LEGISLATION IN THE LORDS.

In another respect, that of advancing Bills by stages, the House of Lords could, as Sir John Astley used to say, give the Commons a stone and beat them. Towards the end of the Session, when, after sitting for months with nothing to do, the Lords find themselves overwhelmed with work, the rapidity with which legislation is accomplished is bewildering to the stranger in the gallery.

The Clerk, rising from his seat at the end of the table, recites the name of a Bill. The Lord Chancellor, wigged and gowned on the Woolsack, says in a breath: "The question - is - that - this - Bill - be - read - a - second - time - those - that - are - of - that - opinion - say - content - the - contrary - not - content - I - think - the - contents - have it."

The Standing Orders having been suspended, as is usual at this time of the Session, the Lord Chancellor moves half a pace to the left of the Woolsack, and sits down. By what seems a simultaneous motion, Lord Morley, Chairman of Committees, taking

an equal pace in the same direction, slips into the chair at the head of the table. This means that the House is in Committee, the Lord Chancellor nowhere, the Chairman of Committees presiding. "Clause One," says Lord Morley, rising to his feet. "Question - is - that - this - clause - stand - part - of - the - Bill - those - that - are - of - that - opinion - say - content - contrary - not - content - I - think - the - contents - have - it - Clause - two." and so on to the end of the Bill, with the same breathless formula and the same unhesitating con-



"LORD CHANCELLOR AND LORD CHAIRMAN."

clusion that "the contents have it." When the preamble is added to the Bill, the Chairman puts the question that the House do now resume. The hidden machinery underneath the floor works again. The Lord Chancellor, sliding half a pace to the right, is on the Woolsack, once more President. The Chairman of Committees, simultaneously moving in the same direction, is out of the Chair, and, for the nonce, is nobody. "The-question-is," says the Lord Chancellor, "that-this-Bill-be-now-read-a-third-time-those-that-are-of-that-opinion," etc. With two able-bodied, active men like Lord Herschell and Lord Morley in charge of the performance, a Bill can be run through the Lords in an incredibly short time.

In the Commons, the best possible in the circumstances is achieved, but the Lords have certain natural advantages that make them the Eclipse of this kind of racing. In the first place, the suspension of the Standing Orders, so that successive stages of a Bill may be taken right off, a matter of course in the Lords, is a serious business in the Commons. The objection of a single member would be effectual in stopping the onward course, and such objection is withheld only on the rarest occasions. Then there are physical conditions. The Speaker of the House of Commons, unlike the Lord Chancellor, is not seated on the level of the floor. He is raised on a pedestal, and when he leaves the Chair on the House going into Committee, must needs descend the steps and withdraw behind the Chair. However urgent the need of haste, it cannot be expected that the Speaker, in wig and gown, should skip down the steps like a young maiden going to the fair. If he did, he might come in contact with Mr. Mellor, stepping forward to occupy the Chair of Committees, which is close by the foot of the Speaker's Chair. In the Lords there is a wide space between the table and the Woolsack, which makes easy the simultaneous moving of Lord Chancellor and Chairman of Committees.

People who talk glibly of the immediate abolition of the House of Lords should think over these things.

It is curious to find so old a
WRITTEN Parliamentary hand as Sir William
SPEECHES. Harcourt going back to the use
of manuscript when delivering
his speeches. He has been in the House of
Commons for a practically uninterrupted
period exceeding a quarter of a century, and
has taken a prominent part in current debates.
Before he entered he had established a

lucrative practice at the Parliamentary Bar. In conversation he is one of the wittiest of men; in debate one of the quickest. Yet, in these latter days, he invariably prepares his speech verbatim in manuscript, and reads it from first page to last. He does it exceedingly well, his delivery lacking little in animation. But the wonder remains that he should do it at all. The practice is reasonable in delivering his financial statement as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Even Mr. Gladstone, on such occasions, condescended to pretty voluminous notes. But Sir William Harcourt extends the practice in various directions, any speech of more than average importance being read from manuscript.

This is doubtless due to sense of responsibility with his still new position as Leader of the House of Commons. The custom certainly dates from his assumption of that office. That it is not necessitated by failing aptitude was repeatedly shown in debate in Committee on his great Budget scheme. He was then constantly on guard, occasionally delivering as many as a score of speeches in a single sitting. There was then displayed no lack of well-ordered information or of apt phrases. On the contrary, these impromptu addresses were more immediately effective than the carefully prepared orations. It was the old Parliamentary gladiator at his best. To see him with written copy of his speech before him is like watching an accomplished swimmer going back to the use of corks.

Another Parliamentary debater
LORD of the first rank who went back
RANDOLPH to the use of manuscript was
CHURCHILL. Lord Randolph Churchill. The
last speech delivered by him in the House
of Commons before his departure on
his sadly interrupted journey round the
world was written out verbatim, and read
to the House. He always carefully pre-
pared his speeches in his study, and in his
palmiest days never rose in ordered debate
without a sheaf of notes. But they were
merely catch notes, from the line of which
he was, upon interruption, ever ready to make
brilliant divagation. With his later manner his
speech suffered much in the delivery, Lord
Randolph, with head bent over his manu-
script, not being audible on the back benches.
Mr. James Bryce, who sat attentive on
the Treasury Bench immediately opposite,
and heard every word of it, told me it was
a remarkably cogent argument, admirably
phrased and illumined by happy illustration,
falling, in these respects, nothing short of
Lord Randolph's earlier successes.



"UNCLE AND NEPHEW."

UNCLE
AND
NEPHEW.

Of all Parliamentary debaters of the day, whether in Lords or Commons, there is no man less dependent upon notes than is the Marquis of Salisbury. As in important debates in the present Parliament he usually speaks towards the close of a sitting, in anticipation of the Premier winding up a debate, he has no opportunity for preparation. Certainly there is no smell of the lamp about his discourses. He does not even, as others do, make a note of thoughts or of criticism that occurs to him whilst listening. When his turn comes he presents himself at the table and, leaning one hand upon it, proceeds with unflinching flow of perfectly turned phrases, most of them carrying barbed points. A sonorous voice and unhurried delivery are details which complete the intellectual treat of hearing Lord Salisbury drink delight of battle with his peers.

Mr. Arthur Balfour shares in degree his uncle's freedom from the trammels of manuscript notes. He is not entirely without their assistance, but they are merest skeletons, and obviously do not confine the range of his speech. Such as they are, they are invariably written on his knee in the House of Commons. As far as may be observed by

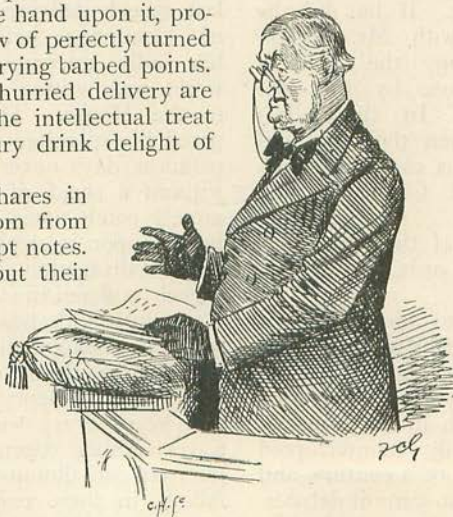
an outsider, it is not his habit to prepare in his study his impromptus, or even the salient points of his argument. The most difficult task that can fall to the lot of a Leader on either side of the House of Commons is to make those set orations, whether over the tomb or the altar, for which necessity from time to time arises. Mr. Gladstone is, by common consent, the only man of the age who could rise to either occasion. Mr. Disraeli, when occupying in 1852 the position now filled by Sir William Harcourt, being



MR. BALFOUR'S "NOTES."

called upon to pronounce a eulogy on the Duke of Wellington, who had just answered to his name in the final roll-call, borrowed his best passage from a lament declaimed by M. Thiers over the tomb of Marshal Gouvion de St. Cyr. This second-rate French Marshal, dead more than twenty years, was forgotten. But Thiers' flash of eloquence was remembered by others than Mr. Disraeli.

Mr. Chamberlain made the most memorable, if not the only, failure of his Parliamentary addresses when he joined in the funeral orations in the House of Commons on the death of Mr. Bright. Sir William Harcourt is prone on such occasions to assume a lugubrious manner that fatally depresses the spirits of his audience. The



"A LUGUBRIOUS MANNER."

last time Mr. Balfour, in his capacity as Leader of the Opposition, took part in such ceremonial proceedings was when the House of Commons passed a resolution of condolence with France upon the murder of President Carnot. Sir William Harcourt, who moved the resolution, read a funeral sermon from manuscript he took out of his breast coat pocket, whilst his voice rose and fell in melancholy cadence. Mr. Balfour, taking a sheet of notepaper from the table, wrote down the outline of what proved to be a short but almost perfect speech, taking as his text successive points in Sir William Harcourt's monody, and giving them fresh turns.

One result of the sub-division of HOPELESSLY parties in the House of Commons

MIXED. following on the disruption in the Liberal ranks has an important effect upon the vitality of debate. Up to the year 1886 the House of Commons was broadly divided between two parties. There were, of course, the Home Rulers—the *tiers parti*, as Mr. O'Donnell called them, a suggestion that naturally led on to the nomenclature of the Fourth Party. But their position did not vary the rule. When they were on the war-path, there were still, at that time, only two parties in the House—the Irish members and the rest.

In such circumstances a member faced his opponents, the Irish members with the addition of having some of them also on their right flank. When spoken sentiments were approved, they were hailed with a hearty cheer running continuously along the benches on one side. Where they were objected to, the shouts of disapproval came all from the same quarter of the encampment. To-day, with the little party under Mr. Chamberlain's command wedged into the very centre of the Liberal forces, things have grown so hopelessly mixed, that the old significance of cheering and counter-cheering is lost. When a member hears Mr. Chamberlain, rising from the Liberal benches, lustily cheered by the Conservatives, and when later the thin black line on the third bench below the gangway on the Liberal side hail with cheers the appearance at the table of Mr. Balfour or Mr. Goschen, the old member, accustomed to other times and manners, "dunno where 'e are." The situation is further complicated by the Irish members sitting aligned with the English country gentlemen, cheering when they sit silent, and derisively howling when they cheer.

Another consequence of this uncanny state

of things is that the give-and-take of debate, which obtains in all well-ordered assemblies, has now become impossible in the House of Commons. It has ever been the custom of the Speaker to call alternately upon members composing the Ministerialists and the Opposition. Now there are the Liberal Unionists to be counted with, and if the topic be, as it sometimes is, an Irish question, there are the Leaders of the Nationalist Party and the Parnellites, who claim severally to be heard. The inevitable consequence is that at critical stages of set debates the House has a speech from a Minister, who is followed by Mr. Balfour, to whom succeeds Mr. Chamberlain. Or, *vice-versâ*, the two allies, separated only by the floor of the House, say the same thing over in different ways. Then, if Mr. Sexton or Mr. McCarthy speaks, Mr. John Redmond must needs deliver an address of equal length. The same thing happens on lower grades, the rank and file of factions of party getting bewilderingly intermingled.

In the House of Lords this lack IN THE of symmetry in the order of LORDS. debate is even more marked, and from the constitution of parties is inevitable. There really are not enough of Liberal peers to go round in one of the set debates to which the Lords occasionally treat themselves. As Lord Rosebery, in his famous speech at Bradford, complained, peers of Liberal persuasion are not more in number than 5 per cent. of the House of Lords. It naturally follows that the preponderance of debating force is on one side. To mention three names indicative of various hostile attitudes towards Liberalism, there are Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Devonshire, and the Duke of Argyll, who may, and sometimes do, follow each other in close succession. When Lord Rosebery, Lord Herschell, Lord Spencer, the Marquis of Ripon, and Lord Russell of Killowen have spoken, the forces of debate on the Liberal side begin to be exhausted; whilst in the Conservative camp there are many other peers beside the Duke of Devonshire and the Duke of Argyll who, having learned fencing in the Liberal school, are now ready to turn unbuttoned foils on what are left of their former comrades. Regarded as a debating assembly, this condition of affairs is a distinct disadvantage to the House of Lords, which, paradoxical as the statement may appear, would find its majority in a far more powerful position if it were numerically less strong.

HARRYING
EX-
MEMBERS.

Old members of the House of Commons withdrawn from Parliamentary life discover on revisiting the familiar scene how jealously guarded are the privileges of sitting members. The House of Commons, if no longer the best club in the world, is certainly the most exclusive. All its approaches are guarded with almost hectic jealousy. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for an unauthorized stranger to enter even the lobby of the House. These are regulations which, though they may seem harsh in personal experience, are absolutely necessary for the conduct of business. Human interest in the House of Commons is so burning in its intensity, that if approach were easy the building would be swamped by the idly curious. As it is, strangers unprovided with orders of admission are kept at arms' length with as much severity as if they were infected with leprosy.

Ex-members find these restrictions particularly obnoxious. Looking in upon a place of which they were at one time privileged and perchance honoured occupants, they find their footsteps politely but firmly dogged by the perfection of police on duty at Westminster Palace. Ordinary strangers may not approach the House of Commons as far as the inner lobby without special permission. Ex-members may go so far but no farther, unless they are accompanied by a sitting member. They may not enter the corridor leading to the dining-room, library, or terrace, nor may they pass in or out by the once familiar staircase leading down to the cloak-room. As for finding a place in or under the strangers' galleries, they are on the footing of the obscurest stranger, and must obtain an order from the Speaker or the Serjeant-at-Arms. These restrictions are, perhaps, necessary. But they are none the less irksome to men who for years have had the run of the House.

The House of Lords makes a difference in this respect in the case of Privy Councillors. A right hon. gentleman of whatever distinction who has been a member of the House of Commons may not, after withdrawing from Parliamentary life, approach beyond the inner lobby of his old quarters. But he has always the right of entry to the House of Lords, and may take his place behind the rails skirting the Throne, shoulder to shoulder with such of Her Majesty's Ministers and members of the Opposition from the House of Commons as are also Privy Councillors.

The House of Commons is, probably, the best place in the world in which to make a joke, however poor. It is so pro-

foundly bored with much talking that it clutches with feverish haste at anything that will permit it to laugh. An impassioned orator who concludes his speech by sitting on his hat is regarded as a benefactor of his species. Another, who with sweep of his right hand knocks over a glass of water, instantly become a popular personage. To this day tender memories linger round a genial Q.C., long severed from Parliamentary life, who once in the course of a single speech twice knocked off the same member's hat. Of all men in the House, the sufferer was Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, a circumstance that added greatly to the subtle enjoyment of the scene. It was in the Parliament of 1880, and the question of the hour related to Mr. Bradlaugh's status. "It is essential," said the hon. and learned gentleman, "that this question should be treated in a calm and judicial manner." Instinctively sweeping out his right hand, by way of illustrating the idea of breadth of view, the learned Q.C. smote the crown of the hat of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, who sat on the Treasury Bench below him.

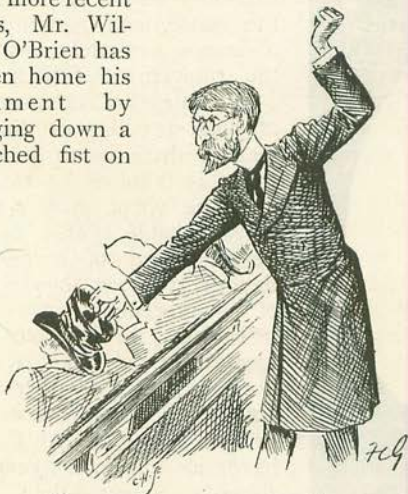
The future Secretary for War, at that time Financial Secretary, is a man of dauntless courage and imperturbable humour. To a senator sitting with arms folded, head bent down, and mind intent on following the argument of an esteemed friend behind, nothing is more disconcerting than to have his hat suddenly swept off his head. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman was equal to the occasion. The House tittered with laughter.



"EQUAL TO THE OCCASION."

He picked up his hat as if that were his ordinary way of having it taken off, replaced it on his head, and returned to the consideration of the points of the argument he had been considering. Ten minutes later, another wave of emotion overcoming the orator, the hat of the Financial Secretary to the War Office was once more trundling along the floor. Then, it is true, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman cautiously moved along the bench out of range of fire, whilst the House gave itself up to uncontrolled laughter.

In more recent times, Mr. William O'Brien has driven home his argument by bringing down a clenched fist on



"DRIVING HOME AN ARGUMENT."

the top of the hat of an hon. member sitting immediately below him. But the record in which the present Secretary of State for War passively assisted remains unbroken.

A less vigorous form of humour in which LAPSUS the House delights LINGUÆ. is a slip of the tongue on the part of a member. The more matter-of-fact he be, the fuller is the enjoyment. Last Session Mr. Arthur Balfour fell upon a phrase, the possible double meaning of which delighted the House. In the course of debate on the affairs

of Matabeleland, the Leader of the Opposition emphatically declared that what was needed for the welfare and prosperity of South Africa was "the extension of roads." As the name of Mr. Cecil Rhodes had been prominently mentioned throughout the debate, not without unfriendly hints that self-aggrandizement was the base of his policy, Mr. Balfour was interrupted by a burst of boisterous laughter, at which he affected innocent amazement, and repeated the phrase again and again, till the House permitted him to conclude the passage.

There was much controversy at the time as to whether he had perceived the *double entendre*, or whether in persisting in reiteration of his phrase he was unconscious of its possible application. Talking the matter over later on the same night, he told me that he recognised the slip as soon as the phrase had escaped his lips. But he was not going to give himself away by accepting the construction humorously put upon it. To those who were present and remember his appearance of genuine astonishment at the interruption, this will show that an old Parliamentary hand may still be young in years, and ingenious in manner.

Incomparably the best mixed saying of this kind ever uttered in the House of Commons dropped from the lips of Mr. Cobden. It was told me by one of the few members of the present House who heard the debates on the Commercial Treaty with France.

"Now I will give you an illustration of what I mean," said Mr. Cobden, reaching a certain point in his exposition. "My hon. friend who sits near me" (indicating Mr. Bright) "spins long yarns of poor quality."

Mr. Cobden got no further with the sentence, the remainder being lost amid inextinguishable laughter. Only Mr. Bright, then in the prime of his powers, a frequent and voluminous contributor to Parliamentary debate, did not see the joke.



"THE EXTENSION OF RHODES."

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XX.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

LORD RANDOLPH'S
DIARY.

TALKING with a friend shortly after his return from South Africa, Lord Randolph Churchill incidentally made reference to "my diary," the remark leaving the impression that he kept such a work with unfailing regularity and unremitted fulness. It will be a pity if the present generation should be deprived of opportunity of studying the book. It would doubtless require severe editing, for the diarist had not a habit of mincing matters of opinion, whether in speech or writing. However handled, there must remain a valuable and picturesque record of the inner scenes of English political life, between the years 1880 and 1892. After that date the fell disease which gripped the strong life of the still young statesman had obtained a mastery that to some extent clouded his judgment and painfully obscured his lucidity.

SECRET
NEGOTIATIONS.

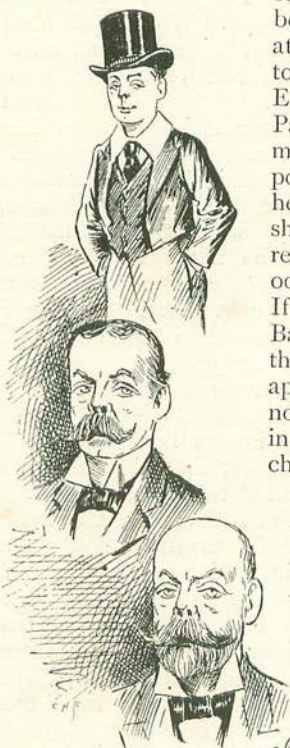
The diary, should it ever see the light, will, doubtless, contain a full account of the negotiations which, in the midsummer of 1890, led him within a step of returning to his seat in the Conservative Cabinet. Lord Salisbury's Government was at the time not doing very well. The necessity for its being strengthened from outside was urgent. Once more pleading glances were turned in the direction of Lord Hartington, with entreaty to "come over and help us." It was understood that, amongst Lord Hartington's most influential colleagues, such a step was hotly opposed. The General Election could not be long delayed. At that epoch, as had been shown in the Central Birmingham episode of the previous year, Mr. Chamberlain was not yet disposed to merge himself and his forces in the Conservative ranks. If Lord Hartington joined the Ministry, his party must perforce either separate from him or finally throw in their lot with their ancient adversaries, standing at the General Election under the Conservative flag. If room were made for Lord Randolph Churchill on the Treasury Bench, the consequent accession

of strength would be such that there would be no necessity for Lord Hartington's crossing the floor.

Mr. W. H. Smith, then Leader of the House, was cordially in favour of the little scheme. Lord Randolph, to all outward appearance, stood aloof from the negotiations, but that he approved them and looked confidently forward to a happy issue appears from a remark made early in July, 1890. At that time an election was pending at Barrow, under circumstances which excited unusual interest in the political camps. Every effort was made on both sides to secure the seat. Lord Randolph Churchill at this time still preserved, from his corner seat behind the Treasury Bench, an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards his former colleagues. Except in the matter of the Parnell Commission, he had not made any ordered attack on their policy. But he had never, since he quitted the Treasury Bench, shown himself friendly to its remaining occupants, whilst upon occasion he was coldly critical. If he could be induced to go to Barrow and speak on behalf of the Ministerial candidate, his appearance on the scene would not only have immediate effect in improving Mr. Wainwright's chances, but would greatly strengthen the Ministry by showing that the chasm between himself and his old colleagues was bridged.

"If," said Lord Randolph, "you see by the papers tomorrow that I have gone down to Barrow to speak for Wainwright, you may bet your boots that before three weeks are over I will be sitting on the Treasury Bench."

He went to Barrow, and it was noticed that on his return to town his attendance on the House of Commons, hitherto fitful, for awhile became regular. But he did not within three weeks, or at any later time, reach the Treasury Bench. It was believed by those cognizant of what had been going forward that it was Lord Salisbury who had proved implacable. It is small wonder that,



LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

save under the direst necessity, he should have shirked renewing relations with the brilliant but erratic and too peremptory statesman who for some months had disputed with him supremacy in his own Cabinet.

CANDIDATE
FOR
BIRMING-
HAM.

Another turning-point of Lord Randolph's career at this interesting time will doubtless be also illumined in the pages of the diary. In 1889, Lord Randolph, apparently in perfect health, certainly in high spirits, had grown weary of playing a comparatively obscure part in politics. He saw in an invitation to contest Birmingham an opportunity of emerging once more into the front rank. In 1885 he had fought Birmingham and almost won the seat, though he tilted against Mr. Bright. Now Mr. Bright was dead, and the Conservative party in Birmingham promptly turned to Lord Randolph. With the assistance of the Dissident Liberals under the leadership of Mr. Chamberlain, the seat might be counted on as won.

It had long been a desire near to Lord Randolph's heart to represent a centre of teeming political activity like Birmingham. He believed that in this constituency he would find warm sympathy with the democratic Toryism of which he was the apostle. On the 2nd of April, 1889, a deputation waited upon him in Connaught Place, conveying to him a pressing invitation to contest the borough. To their surprise he hesitated, promising to give an answer at the House of Commons at five o'clock in the afternoon. It was soon made known that Mr. Chamberlain, instead of showing himself ready to assist in furthering Lord Randolph's views, had put his foot down, and threatened open breach of alliance with the Conservative Party if the candidature were insisted upon. There was no occasion for the spiteful suggestion current at the time that he was adverse to the prospect of two kings smelling at the Birmingham rose, preferring to Lord Randolph Churchill the less brilliant coterie who shared with him the representation of the borough. His objection was based on the sufficient, reasonable argument that the seat belonged to his wing of the Opposition Party, and that, upon a vacancy, it should revert, not to Conservatives, but to Dissident Liberals.

Lord Salisbury and his colleagues found *themselves* in a painfully perplexed position. If they sided with Lord Randolph Churchill they would mortally offend Mr. Chamberlain. If they yielded to Mr. Chamberlain it would be at the double risk of affronting the Conservative

Party in Birmingham, and of sacrificing Lord Randolph Churchill. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was deputed to see Lord Randolph, and succeeded in obtaining from him a promise that if, after conference with Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, it appeared for the good of the party that he should be thrown over, the victim would concur in the arrangement.

The interview took place, and Mr. Chamberlain got his way. Lord Randolph, loyal to his word, yielded to the decision, but at what mental cost few people know. He passed me as he came out of the room of the Conservative Whip where withdrawal from the candidature had been finally wrung from him. He was so altered in personal appearance that for a moment I did not know him. Instead of his usual alert, swinging pace, with head erect, and swiftly glancing eyes, he walked with slow, weary tread, his head hanging down and a look on his face as if tears had been coursing down it. No one who knew him only in public life would have imagined him capable of such emotion. It was a blow from which he never recovered, though there was a recurrence to the old ambition to represent something other than the villadom of Paddington when, a little more than a year before his death, he announced his intention of standing for bustling Bradford.

FOR-
GETTING
GOSCHEN.

In his place in the House of Commons, and in addressing his constituents, Lord Randolph offered explanations of the reasons that induced him on the eve of Christmas, 1886, to resign his place in the Cabinet of Lord Salisbury. It was because his colleagues, the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty, instead of, as he hoped, reducing their Estimates, made increased demand on the revenues of the coming year. In private conversation, Lord Randolph filled up some details that made the proceedings more intelligible.

Already in this month of December he had worked out the broad scheme of his Budget, which he was bent upon making a popular one. The demands of the spending departments hampered, if they did not upset, his calculations. He strove with might and main to induce Mr. W. H. Smith and Mr. Stanhope to recast their Estimates. One morning he spent two hours with Mr. Smith, who must have had an uncommonly hard time of it. It was all in vain. The Ministers insisted upon satisfaction of their full demands. Then Lord Randolph deter-

mined to play his last card. If he yielded now, in addition to spoiling his Budget, his position in the Cabinet would be determined. Almost at the outset of its deliberations he would have been beaten. He believed that he was indispensable to the Government, and that his threat of resignation would be sufficient to subdue his colleagues to his imperious will.

He sent in his resignation on the 22nd of December. Lord Salisbury, in accordance with his habit when in a dilemma, turned to Lord Hartington and invited him to

Mr. Goschen?' she said, in a voice and manner that indicated she knew more than the simple inquiry conveyed. It all flashed on me in a moment. I saw the game was lost. I *had* forgotten Goschen."

LORD RANDOLPH'S BUDGET. It is to be hoped the diary, when we see it, will supply particulars of the Budget scheme on which the young Chancellor of the Exchequer rested high hope of increased and permanent fame. It is certain to have been original, was doubtless daring, and could scarcely have failed to be democratic

in its tendencies. Authorities at the Treasury, accustomed to deal with financial giants like Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Goschen, were astonished at the ease and thoroughness with which Lord Randolph mastered the intricate questions of national finance, and the originality of the ideas he brought to bear upon the situation of the hour. Talking over the subject, one of the most highly-placed authorities at the Treasury remarked, "I do not know how far Lord Randolph had gone in obtaining the sanction of his colleagues in the Cabinet for the scheme he early in December, 1886, had adumbrated. But I may tell you that had a Budget planned on the contemplated lines been introduced by a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, it would have created a sensation equal to what

followed on Peel's proposal for the abolition of the Corn Laws, or Dizzy's Establishment of Household Suffrage."

One wonders whether Lord Randolph had designed to anticipate Sir William Harcourt in dealing with the Death Duties. Some day we shall know.

A MAR-
VELLOUS
MEMORY. In his early Parliamentary days Lord Randolph

Churchill had an almost phenomenal memory. He could repeat a whole page of verse or prose after having once read it over. This being asserted at a country house where he was staying, and polite incredulity being expressed, he offered a wager that he would, after once reading it over, recite a page from any book to be selected



"WILL YOU COME OVER?"

save the country by joining the Ministry. Lord Hartington declined, and it seemed that there would be nothing for the belated Ministry but to make peace with Lord Randolph on his own terms and invite him back to the fold.

"A little less than a week after I had written to Lord Salisbury," Lord Randolph told me when chatting about the event, "I was walking up St. James's Street when I met ——" (mentioning the name of a lady well known in London society). "She was driving, but stopped the carriage to speak to me. She asked how things were going on, and I said I thought they were doing nicely. Hartington had refused to join them, and whom else can they have? 'Have you thought of



"NEVERMORE."

by his doubting friend. The wager was accepted, and a volume of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" was taken down from the library shelf. The volume was opened at random. Lord Randolph read a page, and handing the book over to the umpire, recited every word without error or hesitation.

Another wager was won under quite different circumstances. **A RACE AGAINST TIME.** During an early Session of the Parliament of 1880-85, Lord Randolph was dining in company where question arose of the time it took to pass over Westminster Bridge. He undertook to cross it from the Surrey side to the steps of the Clock Tower what time Big Ben was chiming the quarters and striking the hour of midnight. The bet was accepted, and one summer night, on the stroke of twelve, a solitary pedestrian might have been observed speeding like the wind across Westminster Bridge. It was the future Leader of the House of Commons, and he won his bet.



A RACE AGAINST TIME.

Lord Randolph was a great acquisition to the dinner-table, and for some years his company was more eagerly competed for than any other star of the season. He was a little uncertain, displaying a great ability of saying nothing if the company were not entirely to his liking. Worse still, if it was particularly boring, or for other reason distasteful to him, he had a way of dropping an occasional remark that was not conducive to serenity. He was a great believer in the social board as an adjunct to the political campaign, and entertained hospitably and habitually. When the Fourth Party was beginning to

become a power in the House of Commons, the rank and file, with one, two, or, at most, three guests from outside, frequently dined with the Leader in Connaught Place. He often gave little Sunday night dinners at the Turf Club. I remember one cheery evening when, of a party of five, Father Healy was at his best. At the close of the Session of 1880, the Fourth Party, aspiring to be, at least, in this respect, on a footing of equality with Her Majesty's Ministers, celebrated the eve of the Prorogation by going down to Greenwich to a whitebait dinner.

One of Lord Randolph's dinners, which excited much attention at the time, was given at the Junior Carlton Club in the course of the Session preceding his departure for South Africa. The invitations were "to meet the Prince of Wales," and the fact that among the guests was Mr. Richard Power, then the Whip of the united Parnellite Party, was made much of in political gossip. "Here," it was said, "was Lord Randolph Churchill bringing the Prince of Wales and official Home Rulers together." Lord Randolph was absolutely innocent of any such design. He wanted to get together a varied circle of cheerful people who were likely to interest the Prince of Wales, and there were few more attractive than "Dick" Power, one of the most popular men in the House of Commons. Of others present on this occasion, I remember Sir William Harcourt, Lord Morris, the present Solicitor-General, then plain Mr. Frank Lockwood; Mr. Louis Jennings, and Mr. George Lewis, not at that time knighted. Of a company that did not exceed a dozen, three have since died—Louis Jennings, Dick Power, and now the host.

**A
FAREWELL
DINNER.**

The last time I saw Lord Randolph was when he bade me good-bye on the eve of his journey round the world, which ended in the haven of a grave at Woodstock. In his mother's house in Grosvenor Square he gave a farewell dinner to something like a score of old friends, a catalogue of whose names testifies to the wideness of his personal sympathies. On his right hand sat Mr. Arthur Balfour, in old Fourth Party days a mere private under his command, now heritor of the position he had thrown up. On his left sat Mr. Henry Chaplin, with whom at one portion of his stormy career early friendship had suffered some vicissitudes. Next to the Cromwellian ex-Chief Secretary for Ireland sat his successor, Mr. John Morley, a juxtaposition which made Lord

Randolph's eyes twinkle with something of their ancient merriment. Looking round the table, I recall among the guests Mr. David Plunket, Mr. Rochfort Maguire, the earliest emissary of civilization at the Court of Lo Bengula; Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Edward Dicey, Sir George Lewis, Sir Henry Calcraft, Sir Edward Lawson, Sir M. Hicks - Beach, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, the dramatist; and Sir Francis Knollys, secretary to the Prince of Wales.

Lord Randolph told me he had asked three others whose presence, had it been brought about, would have further diversified this notable gathering. They were Sir William Harcourt, detained at home by a dinner engagement; Mr. Asquith, on duty at White Lodge in anticipation of the birth of an heir to the Duke of York; and Mr. Henry Irving, engaged on theatrical duties. Lord Randolph, though somewhat excited, was, more than usual of late, his old self. He spoke with eager interest of his coming journey. The two prospects that most attracted him were the shooting of big game in India and the opportunity of visiting Burmah—"Burmah, which I annexed," he proudly said. He had accepted a commission from a Paris journal to write some half-dozen letters, descriptive of his tour, and intended to fill them chiefly with record of his shooting expedition. But he did not reach India; and Burmah never saw the statesman who, in his brief tenure of the India Office, had added the glow of its rubies to the splendour of the English crown.



It is possible that when these A VACANT lines appear in print Mr. Gladstone, invigorated by his sojourn on the Riviera, may have returned, casually at least, to the familiar scene at Westminster. Up to the present time of writing he has not visited the House of Commons since on the night of March in last year he quietly walked out after having flung down the gauntlet at the feet of the astonished peers. It seemed on the morrow of that day that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the House of Commons to carry on its business with this commanding figure withdrawn. It was like taking away the centre pillar from the roof-tree.

But it is the old story that no man, however supremely great, is indispensable. An anonymous philosopher has written: "The man who is curious to see how the world could get along without him can find out by sticking a needle into a millpond, withdrawing it, and looking at the hole." In the dignity of the House of Commons, its measure of eloquence, its range of individual influence, a great chasm yawns where Mr. Gladstone used to sit. Nevertheless, the House, being above all things (in spite of some episodes to the contrary) a business assembly, having made up its mind that Mr. Gladstone's withdrawal from active participation in its life was inevitable and is irretrievable, promptly set itself to do without him.

During the present Session evidence of a significant character has been forthcoming of the final

and complete recognition of the fact that one who for half a century was a chief ornament of the House of Commons no longer forms part of it. A familiar and well devised regulation of debate in the House is that no member may allude to another by surname. If a Minister, he mentions him by the style of his office. If a private member, he drags in the full name of his constituency. Mr. Gladstone is in



Parliamentary parlance "the right honourable gentleman the member for Midlothian," and should be so styled in chance reference to him in debate. But so remote has he grown to be in the minds of men busy night and day at Westminster that several times they, making chance allusion to him, have spoken of "Mr. Gladstone." On the earliest occasions of this lapse it was unobserved. As it threatened to become habitual, recurrence was met by cries of "Order! order!" and the offending member harked back to the more rotund style of allusion.

NOBLE LORDS
AND HON.
MEMBERS.

This is one of the forms of procedure in which the House of Lords directly differs from the Commons. New members of the popular Chamber visiting the Lords have felt a momentary shock at hearing peers referred to by name in the course of debate. When it comes to actually naming a bishop, the sensation is not altogether free from taint of sacrilege. It is noted that peers recently imported from the Commons avoid as far as possible what they have been trained to regard as an unparliamentary practice. They talk of "the noble lord on the Woolsack," "the noble lord who has just spoken," "the noble marquis below the gangway," or, "the noble lord on the cross benches." The awkwardness soon wears off, and they come to speak of Lord Spencer, Lord Wemyss, Lord Cowper, and the rest with dangerous glibness.

The necessity for this direct reference is insuperable in the Lords, for the sufficient reason that there is no other means of identifying members. In the Commons it is not only convenient, but, though it seems a small matter, I believe there is no custom that does more to preserve the dignity of the House and the courtesy of debate than that which forbids the mention of members by name. There is a subtle, indescribable difference between alluding to an adversary as "the hon. member for North Louth" and the feelings that might submerge the excited mind if he were called "Mr. Healy,"

much less if it were permissible to allude to him as "Tim." There is the same difference between the actuality "Mr. T. Harrington" and the abstraction "the hon. member for the Harbour Division of Dublin." I select these names simply because juxtaposition of the two gentlemen in a recent debate on the action of the Parnellite members *vis-à-vis* Home Rule, brought sharply out possibilities under other circumstances—say similar close neighbourhood in debate at the Board of Guardians or in Committee Room No. 15. It is, in given circumstances and with heated temperament, so easy to fly at Tim Healy or to land a counter-stroke on the jaw of Tim Harrington—of course, I mean in the way of verbal argument—that the temptation might prove irresistible. When, in the whitest heat of controversy, one has to pause and mouth the stiffly courteous reference to "the hon. and learned member for North Louth," "the hon. and learned member for the Harbour Division of Dublin," not only is time given for reflection, but there is imported into the conversation a certain ceremoniousness quite incompatible with roughness of demeanour or coarseness of speech.

When procedure in the House of Representatives at Washington was being formed, this spell in use in the House of Commons was noted and attempt made to adapt it. It was ordered that no member should be alluded to by name, the form of reference

being "the hon. gentleman from Kentucky," "the hon. gentleman from Wisconsin," "the hon. gentleman from Illinois," and so forth. This avoidance of the worst has had modifying effect. But, as occasional reports from Washington testify, it has not wholly effected the desired purpose. When the wind of controversy rises, the appellation "honourable" is dropped, and there are hardly any limits to the irritating contumely and scorn that may lurk under a chance reference to "the gentleman from Kentucky," "the gentleman from Wisconsin," or "the gentleman from Illinois."



"TIM."

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXI.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THE
LATE
SPEAKER.

IN the history of Parliament it has rarely happened that, within the space of fourteen months, the House of Commons has, in swift succession, been deprived of the presence of two of its foremost men. Little more than a year after Mr. Gladstone resigned the Premiership, and practically withdrew from Parliamentary life, Mr. Peel stepped out of the Chair, and the House has lost an appreciable portion of its stateliness. It is eleven years on the 26th February last since Mr. Whitbread moved that "Mr. Arthur Peel take the Chair of this House as Speaker." When the member for Leamington rose to make acknowledgment of the honour done him there was some cheering from the Liberal benches. But it was unmistakably a perfunctory business. The truth is, the Speaker-elect was a personality unfamiliar even by sight to the majority of members. His brother they knew; burly, sometimes boisterous, Sir Robert. But who was Arthur that he should be made Speaker?

Yet at this date he had very nearly served his majority as a member of the Assembly which presently he was to adorn with unrivalled, unsuspected gifts. July next would, if he were still with us, see the thirtieth year he has sat in the House, uninterruptedly representing Warwick, with which, by the latest Reform Bill, passed whilst he was Speaker, Leamington was, for Parliamentary purposes, bracketed. He had held minor office, being successively Secretary to the Poor Law Board, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whip (for a few months whilst the House was not sitting), and Under Secretary of State for Home Affairs through the Session of 1880. In December of that year, finding the duties of an Under Secretaryship too exhausting for his strength, he retired, as it seemed, from Ministerial and official life, obscurity from which, four years later, he

emerged into the fierce light that beats on the Speaker's Chair.

From the moment Mr. Peel stood up to advance to the Chair his personality seemed to undergo a miraculous change. The quiet, retiring, silent member suddenly revealed himself to the astonished House as a man of commanding presence, resolute will, and rare gifts of oratory. I have heard many notable speeches in the House of Commons through more than a score of years, but never one which created such a sensation as the brief speech of Mr. Arthur Peel, as he stood by the corner seat below the gangway in the dress of a private member, acknowledging his unanimous election to the position of First Commoner of England. That is a proud, ancient, unique title. Mr. Peel

has not only borne it untarnished, but has distinctly added to its lustre. There are few men in the House of Commons who can say with Mr. Gladstone that they have sat under six Speakers. It does not need that opportunity of experience in order to form an estimate of Mr. Peel's position in the long, illustrious roll. It would simply be impossible to name any point on which improvement in manner, bearing, or any of the more solid qualities that go to make up a successful Speaker, might have been achieved by Mr. Peel, more especially through the



SIR ROBERT PEEL AND MR. ARTHUR PEEL.

later years of his Speakership.

One quality that might in others have proved a fatal defect was with him the crown of the perfect edifice. Constitutionally, he is a man not slow to anger, rather subject to gusts of impetuous passion. The House will remember more than one occasion when the lightning has suddenly flashed forth from the stately figure standing by the Chair, and the thunder has rolled under the canopy. It has been magnificent, and it has also been war. No man, not even Mr. Biggar in his adaman-

tine days, withstood the wrath of the outraged majesty of the late Speaker.

Mr. Peel is probably surprised at AN IDEAL his own endurance in being able SPEAKER. to retain the Speakership through eleven years. As early as the Session of 1888, the state of his health was such that there were circumstantial reports of his imminent retirement. Exactly a year ago these were repeated with definite assurance. Writing to me under date 3rd May, 1894, Mr. Peel said: "I do not know how the rumours originated and acquired such a specific character. I have not entertained the idea of resignation, which must of course depend upon the state of my health and upon my powers of endurance, which have undoubtedly been shaken by a recent attack of influenza and by its consequences." From time to time his pale face showed at what personal cost he persisted in taking the Chair. As with his illustrious father, a sense of public duty was ever paramount with Mr. Peel, and in view of opportunity of serving his country and the House of Commons, which he loved, he risked his life as directly and as fearlessly as a soldier stakes his on the field of battle. It is not exaggeration to say that there is no occupation open to man which makes supreamer calls on capacity than does that

of Speaker of the House of Commons. The Assembly is a team of exceedingly kittle cattle, which sharply resents any appearance of being driven, but secretly likes to know there is a strong hand guiding it, and is prone openly to resent proof to the contrary.

Against the Speaker's decision there is the ultimate Court of Appeal of the House itself. But it is rarely invoked. Practically, the Speaker wields autocratic power. A difficulty peculiar to his semi-judicial office is the uncertainty of everything in the House of Commons. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the slumbrous depths may be stirred by sharp tumult, and the Speaker called upon forthwith to decide a knotty point. The very fact of his unchallengeable position would make a mistake fatal. I have a vague idea that upon one occasion Mr. Peel gave a

judgment recognised by the House, and admitted by subsequent events, to be mistaken. But I really forget what it was about. What dwells with sharper touch on the memory is the reiterated occasions when the sonorous voice, ringing through the suddenly silenced chamber, has brought order out of chaos, and has comforted the House with the assurance that its highest interests, its dignity, and its noblest traditions were worthily represented, and would never fail to be vindicated, by the Speaker.

THE
STRATEGIC
MOVEMENT
TO THE
REAR.

It was one of the penalties of prominent position that Mr. Chamberlain's escapade in the division lobby on the night Sir Henry James moved against the import of cotton duties in India for a while engrossed public attention. The incident is by no means uncommon. It is sometimes detected, but, there is reason to believe, oftener than not it passes without notice being taken. In Mr. Chamberlain's case there was every detail contributory to dramatic effect. When the House met on Thursday, the 21st of February, there appeared certain prospect of a crisis that would result in the resignation of the Ministry. On the Address they had been attacked again and again under the leadership of Mr. Arthur Balfour. Now, the

other wing of the Unionist Party had put the battle in array. It was known that the Lancashire Liberal members, under pressure from their constituents, were resolved at any cost to resist a proposal on which Ministers had staked their existence. If these votes could be captured the Government were doomed.

It happened on this particular night that Mr. Arthur Balfour was detained at home in company with the influenza fiend. This naturally brought Mr. Chamberlain into fuller prominence, and promised to make his personal triumph the more complete. In due course came Mr. Henry Fowler's famous speech, before which opposition melted like snowflakes on the river. Long before midnight it was clear that not only would the Government not be turned out, but that they

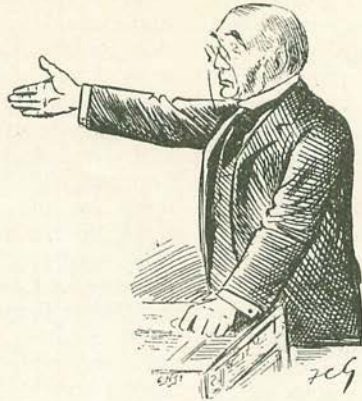


THE SPEAKER (MR. PEELE).

would have a rattling majority; whilst to those who, after the Secretary for India's speech, supported Sir Henry James would attach the odium of sacrificing to personal business interests the welfare of India.

It is easy enough after the event to perceive that Mr. Chamberlain would have done better to follow the ordinary course and back up his colleague in the division lobby. Decision had to be taken amid the bustle of the House being cleared for the division at the close of a debate that had taken a surprising turn. Mr. Chamberlain hesitated and was lost. His appeal to the Serjeant-at-Arms for means of escape by the locked door, his return to the Ministerial lobby, the only avenue open to him, and his final disappearance through what the Speaker slyly described as "one of those means of escape known to everybody" were narrowly watched, graphically reported, and irresistibly appealed to the popular sense of humour.

It was for the time embarrassing and hurtful, since here, scarcely less than in France, it is ridicule that kills. But in a sense, also, it was complimentary, as had the incident



MR. FOWLER: "WE ARE ALL MEMBERS FOR INDIA."

IN THE WRONG LOBBY. Nothing is commoner than to find members straying into

the wrong lobby. In one of the divisions on the Address, immediately preceding Mr. Chamberlain's adventure, Mr. Labouchere found himself in the lobby with the Conservatives. He had just time to turn and flee before the door was locked, his escape being accompanied by a hilarious cheer, plainly heard in the emptied House. What makes the situation difficult

is that approach to the separate lobbies is obtained from opposite ends of the



"SHUT IN."

befallen a member of less interesting personality, it would have been laughed at and straightway forgotten.



"THE ESCAPE."

House. If a member inadvertently walks into the wrong lobby anywhere near the tail of the procession, he has barely time to withdraw, rush the full length of the House, and gain the other door before it is locked. The feat is sometimes accomplished, ladies in the gallery being appalled at the discovery of a father, a husband, or a brother flying up or down the floor of the House at a speed scarcely exceeded by Tam O'Shanter when, on a memorable night, he crossed the brig.

When the process of clearing the House is nearly accomplished, the Serjeant-at-Arms stands by the locked door leading into the outer lobby. Messengers are appointed to side doors leading into either lobby. They hold up their hand in signal that the door is locked and the House cleared. Whereupon the Serjeant-at-Arms unlocks the outer door, and the stream which has passed the wicket where the clerks stand ticking off names surges into the outer lobby.

Up to a very recent date this lobby was also kept locked, members being cooped up there till the tellers had completed their task and handed in the figures at the Table. At the beginning of last Session the Speaker authorized the unlocking of the central lobby door simultaneously with the appearance of the head of the stream issuing from the division lobby. Whilst convenient for members, this is an arrangement that considerably increases the difficulties of the Whips, and may some day affect the destiny of a Ministry. It not infrequently happens that a critical division on the main question is immediately followed by one on a side issue or a formal point. Under the old order of things, the Whips had their men in hand ready to return to the House if a second division were challenged. Now they stream forth like school-boys at the stroke of noon, and are competing for cabs in Palace Yard at the moment when the bell is ringing for another division.

CATCHING
A WEASEL
ASLEEP.

Beside the danger of inadvertently straying into the wrong lobby, there is the risk of being caught napping in the lobbies when the division unexpectedly takes place. Such was the fate of Sir Walter Barttelot. One night, during the height of the Parnellite obstruction, the Irish members trooping into the lobby, against the united force of Liberals and Conservatives, found Sir Walter fast asleep. Suddenly awakened he tried to escape, but was captured, brought to the Table, and obliged to tell his sad story. Another case was that of an esteemed Liberal member, whom the division bell surprised, locked up in one of the lavatories. It was the wrong lobby for him, so he proposed to stop there. He also was brought up to the Table and invited to state where he was when the question was put.

"In there—in there!" he said, spasmodically pointing finger and thumb at an imaginary recess under the gallery behind the Treasury Bench.

The capture of Mr. Joseph Gillis Biggar under similar circumstances was an event that for the Conservatives gilded a whole week of hard fighting with the Irishry. The member for Cavan, worn out with all-night sittings, one evening retired to the division lobby, and, stretching himself on a couch, fell into peaceful slumber. It was broken in upon by the roar of delight with which the Conservatives, coming in for a division challenged by Mr. O'Donnell, found the member for Cavan within their lines. Joseph, like Major Bagstock, who bore his Christian name, was "sly, devilish sly." He affected to make light of the incident. One more added to the Ministerial majority against the Irish members would, he said, be neither here nor there. The Ministerialists thought he was wisely endeavouring to minimize an awkward incident, and went on passing through the wicket, chuckling at the notion that the division list of the next day would contain the name of Mr. Biggar catalogued with the gentlemen of England in opposition to his esteemed colleagues under the leadership of Mr. Parnell. Mr. Hart-Dyke (not yet knighted) was the Ministerial teller in this lobby, and kept a sharp look-out for Joseph Gillis. When the last member had passed through it was known that the member for Cavan had not voted, and yet the lobby was tenantless. A hunt was merrily organized, and one of the lavatory doors was discovered to be shut and locked.

"Very well," said Mr. Hart-Dyke, in a voice designed to penetrate the closed door, "we will wait till he comes out. I sha'n't hand the figures in to the clerk till the last man has voted."



"TELLERS."

There was no help for it, and after a brief time, Joseph Gillis blushing came forth, passed the wicket, and had the satisfaction of recording his vote on behalf of Her Majesty's Government against his comrades from Ireland.

When obstruction is in full force the process of taking divisions is regularly and effectively used.

Like much else in the same direction, opportunity was discovered by the Irish members in the early stages of the fight for Home Rule. British members systematically declined to play the Parnellite game by extending the debate. The Irish members talked as long as they could, and when physical exhaustion set in they just took a division. When the House is full and the numbers pretty equally divided, a division occupies from ten to fifteen minutes. When the minority is small and the majority muster in large numbers the time is increased, since the bulk of members are passing through one gallery instead of simultaneously deploying in two detachments.

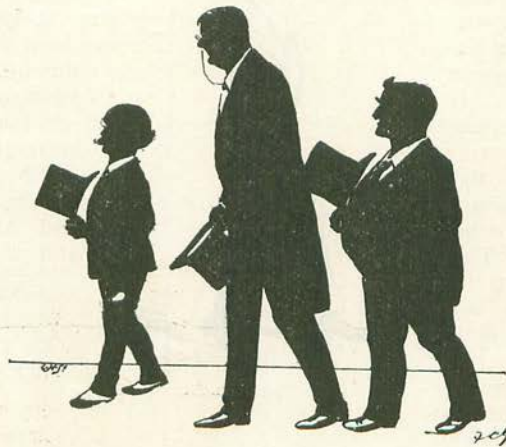
In addition to taking up so much time there is, for those engaged in the conflict, a pleasant and healthful change of occupation. Whilst they rest from the labour of talking, they stretch their legs in a stroll round the lobby and come back refreshed. When they are tired they can do it again, with the certainty that the majority of this potent Assembly are at their mercy.

An attempt was made in revising the Rules of Procedure to grapple with this tyranny, by empowering the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees either to refuse to put a challenge for a division when he regards it as frivolous and vexatious, or, short of that, to call upon members clamouring for a division to stand up in their places and be counted. It is fresh evidence of the innate Conservatism of the House of Commons where its procedure is concerned that these regulations have

practically become a dead letter. I remember only one occasion when a small faction, insisting on a hopeless division, were called upon to stand up in their places. The object in view, the saving of time, is only partially effected. What follows upon the episode is that the Committee clerks are called in, bringing their printed list of names with them. Standing at the bar they tick off the names of the members upstanding, and these are recorded in the division lists the next day as if they had voted. The effect was certainly deterrent, inasmuch as ordinary members shrank from the ridicule of the situation. To stand up like naughty boys placed on a stool at school whilst their companions audibly chuckled is not an envious position for a possibly elderly gentleman, something in the City, or in professional courts. The practice was not pursued, though there were many occasions, notably in Committee on the Home Rule Bill of 1893, when action of the Chairman in this direction seemed irresistibly invited.

THE LAST
OF THE
SMOLLETTES.

A paragraph has appeared in the papers announcing that Mr. Patrick Boyle Smollett, the last of the Smolledds of Bonhill, a descendant of Tobias Smollett, novelist and historian, died in his ninety-second year at the family residence, Cameron House, Dumbartonshire. Few men in the present House of Commons will recognise in connection with this record a member who acquired some notoriety in the Parliament of twenty years ago. He then sat for Cambridge, coming in with the flood of the tide that swept away the Liberals and



"CONSTITUTIONAL EXERCISE."

placed Mr. Disraeli in power. It was not his first acquaintance with the House, since he had represented his native county of Dumbarton from 1859 to 1868. He came back after long retirement, an odd fossil, with manners that ruffled the equanimity of a modern Parliament that had not yet seen the growth of Mr. Biggar.

Mr. Smollett took the earliest opportunity on his return to the House to step to the front. He brought forward an amendment on going into Committee of Supply with the object of calling attention to "the abrupt dissolution of the late Parliament." The performance might have passed without notice, only it chanced that Mr. Gladstone was making one of his then fitful appearances on the Front Opposition Bench. On him Mr. Smollett fastened, one hand in his trousers pocket, the other shaking a truculent forefinger at the statesman whom he accused of indulging in "sharp practice more likely to have come from an attorney's office than from a Cabinet of English gentlemen." "The stratagem," he added, "recoiled on the head of the trickster," this with another gesture towards Mr. Gladstone, but just stepped down from high estate, not yet accustomed to these personal vituperations. He was magnificently angry, trampling on Smollett as a lion, raging through a jungle, crushes smaller things.

The member for Cambridge, though by nature pachydermatous, did not soon get over this mauling. He recovered in time, and occasionally amused the House by his gruff speech, attacking people from whom he differed as if he were literally butting at them with his bullet head. He was very proud of his descent from Tobias Smollett. In copies of *Dod* of the day will be found a note, contributed by him, stating that he was "the great-grand-nephew of the celebrated historian and novelist." That he tried to live up to his ideal of his kinsman was evident in his Parliamentary manner.

Effect was lent to his home-thrusts by the Dumbartonshire accent in which they were delivered. This peculiarity once led him and the House into a difficulty. Speaking in the course of debate on India, Mr. Smollett made a remark which drew from old Sir George Balfour one of those tearful, plaintive cries of "Hear, hear!" with which he was wont to express approval of a passing remark. Mr. Smollett turned upon him, his red face seeming to blaze with fury, his sparse hair standing straight up in uncontrollable wrath.

"The gallant gentleman cheers," he said, "and I will admit to the fool——"

A shudder ran through the House. Sir George Balfour never succeeded in maintaining at Westminster the reputation he had earned at Calcutta. Still, this was going a little too far even for a chartered libertine of debate like the member for Cambridge. Several members sprang to their feet with evident intention of appealing to the Speaker on the point of order. Mr. Smollett, taking them all in in one comprehensive glare, continued: "I will admit to the fool all that has been said about these unjustifiable annexations."

Then the House saw that "fool" was Dumbartonshire for "full."

NEW CONTINENTS. Mr. Acland has a good story, not yet collated into the interesting accounts from time to time published by school inspectors, of the eccentricities of examinations. At a Board school in Central London a class

was under examination in geography. The exercise had been preceded by lessons in grammar, where one of the scholars had mastered the great truth that "the vowels are five in number—a, e, i, o, u, sometimes w and y."

"How many quarters are there in the globe?" asked the inspector, turning to a fresh subject.

"Four, sir," answered a smart boy.

"Name them."

"Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, sometimes w and y."

A NEW ROMANCE OF THE PEERAGE. Mr. Swift MacNeill omits from his account of the monotonously undesirable origin of

peers who, having obtained their peerage in Ireland, voted

against the Home Rule Bill, a story which lingers to this day in Dublin as to the genesis of a well-known peerage. At the time of the Rebellion of '98, the founder of the family was a second-hand bookseller in Dublin. After a moderately long career behind the counter he retired from business, bought an estate near Dublin, set up as a country gentleman, and established a family, which, growing in influence and affluence, were at length admitted to the English peerage.



MR. ARTHUR ACLAND.

The people of Dublin could not believe that any man could make a fortune out of selling second-hand books, certainly not a fortune sufficiently large to justify the style in which the retired tradesman lived. In this dilemma the story got about, and was firmly believed in Dublin, that the money was forthcoming from discovery of bank-notes in the books bought in the libraries of the Irish gentry when their establishments were broken up. In the troublesome times preceding and following upon '98, well-to-do people were afraid to put their money in banks that seemed tottering to a fall. They accordingly (so rumour ran) discreetly disposed of them between the leaves of their books, stowed these away in their libraries, and either forgot or lost trace of them. The old bookseller, falling by chance upon such treasure-trove, thereafter carefully examined books coming into his possession, and so made his fortune. This fairy tale was told me by a member of the present House of Commons, whose family has long been associated with Dublin.

Last Session saw a departure A FADING from ancient practice which did CUSTOM. not meet with the amount of notice its importance justified. Up to very recent times it was the custom of the Leader of the Opposition to have a field night on the occasion of the second reading of the Appropriation Bill. The course of the Session was reviewed, the action of members criticised, and in promising circumstances a hostile amendment was moved and divided upon. The House would as soon have thought of proroguing without at least one long night's debate on the Appropriation Bill, as it would of going off for the recess without shaking hands with the Speaker.

The second reading of the Appropriation



MR. SWIFT MACNEILL ON THE IRISH PEERAGE.

Bill is an opportunity provided by a perhaps too beneficent assembly for discussion of miscellaneous questions. Nothing is too good or too bad, too important or too trivial, to be talked round at length whilst the Appropriation Bill is being carried through its successive stages. The Irish members banded together as the Home Rule Party early discovered this opportunity and made the most of it. They were equal to spending the whole week, more or less pleasantly and usefully, in talking about a succession of topics introduced under the broad wing of the Appropriation Bill. Probably it was this graft upon an old custom that finally brought it into desuetude. The Leaders of the Opposition shrank from

being parties to a hollow game entered upon at a period of the Session when withers had long been wrung. They withdrew from the field, leaving the Irish members in possession.

It happens just now that, being in close alliance with the Government of the day, the Irish members have no temptation to make themselves finally disagreeable at the close of a Session. Thus it came to pass that last year the Appropriation Bill was run through without semblance of debate, only Mr. Alpheus Cleophas Morton clutching at the fluttering robe of the departing Speaker with inquiry whether in Committee on the Bill he might not discuss affairs in Uganda. The Speaker declined to anticipate the judgment of the Chairman of Committees, which in due course was given with great promptitude. Mr. Morton again putting his question, Mr. Mellor sternly answered, "Certainly not," and before Mr. Morton quite knew where he was, the Appropriation Bill was through Committee, and all was ready for the prorogation.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

OTHER DAYS AN old Parliamentary hand, who has known the House of Commons for thirty years, had OTHER MANNERS. Ministerial connection with one side and enjoyed intimate personal acquaintance with leading personages on the other, laments to me the lack of possibilities of leadership, either in the Cabinet or in the House of Commons. It has come to pass, he says, that under existing circumstances the so-called Leader does not drive but is driven. He recalls the time when Mr. Disraeli, yet far off the supreme height of his power, was, for a brief while, Leader of the House of Commons. This was from mid-summer, 1866, till the General Election of 1868, which brought Mr. Gladstone in with a rush. Through the Session of 1868 Disraeli was not only Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House, but Premier. Still, though nominally in power, he was actually in a minority. But he would hold office on no other consideration than that, being Leader, he should lead and the party should follow.

There were young bloods amongst the Conservatives in those days. On one occasion, two who have since come prominently to the front gave notice of opposition to a proposal made by Mr. Gladstone which the Ministerial Party were enthusiastically inclined to support. Disraeli thought it would be a mistake in tactics, and decided that the amendment should not be moved. He sent for his two young friends (my informant was one of them), spoke to them with fatherly approval of their political acumen, extolled their amendment regarded as an abstract proposition, and finished by saying it would not do in the practical politics of the moment.

"And there," said the now grey-haired statesman, "was an end of the matter. We

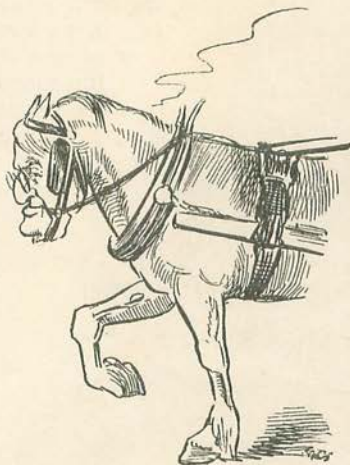
were highly flattered by the attention paid to us by the Prime Minister. Nothing could be more gracious than his manner, or, I may add, more inflexible. We thought no more of arguing with him than we would with the head master at Eton. Still less did we contemplate disobeying his injunction. We just tore up the draft of the amendment. But imagine such a case arising to-day, and it is not difficult, for it occasionally presents itself at three or four turns of an important debate. Suppose two, or even one, of the gentlemen on the benches below the gangway thought they knew better than

Harcourt how to manage a particular turn in the stream of events. The first intimation he would have of the pother would come either by hearing notice given of an amendment, or by finding it on his copy of the Orders when he opened it in the morning. As for hope that at a private interview the mutineers would be brought to toe the line, you might as well try to check the flow of the tide in the Thames by jumping into the river off this Terrace.

"It is better on our side, but Arthur Balfour is not wholly free from the malign influence of insubordination.

The crises are not so acute, partly because he is in a stronger position, being free from the responsibilities of office, and largely because with us habits of discipline are more deeply ingrained.

"Beyond this personal attitude of individual members, there underlies the situation the new disturbing element of factions or sections of party who are up for sale. When I began political life, there were two parties, Liberals and Conservatives, and we had stand-up fights round big principles. Now you never quite know where you are to-day, and dare not guess where you may be to-morrow. If a Leader of either party



'DRIVEN.'

attempts to walk straight along the ordered path, he is either assailed by a section of his own followers, who want to go down some by-path, or is allured by the prospect of gaining over, even temporarily, a section of the other side if he will only change his step. There is no more leadership. It is all opportunism. I remember what Harcourt said in summing up the debate on the Address in February after we, the Constitutional party, had gone wandering round all points of the compass in search of a hole in which we might drop the Government. 'Why can't you fight under your old colours?' he asked. 'What has become of the old blue flag? There seems to be no true blue left. There is a kind of mixture, I don't know how to describe it. There is the faded yellow of Birmingham' (that was Chamberlain's amendment). 'There is a little touch of green from Waterford' (that's John Redmond's), 'and there's a little splotch of red from West Ham.' That refers to our appropriation of Keir Hardie's amendment on the unemployed.

"It's true and was well put. But it is true even in fuller degree of the position of Lord Rosebery and Harcourt, in virtual command of a motley host in an ever-simmering condition of mutiny. It's a new turn of things when you come to think of it. Some day there may arise amongst us a leader strong enough to combat circumstances and really lead. But I think it is highly improbable. It is more likely that the present condition of things will become increasingly prevalent."

THE STRANGER WITHIN THE GATE. It is an old tradition of the House of Commons that when a division is imminent the House is cleared of strangers. This admission of knowledge of the presence of strangers is in itself a comparatively modern innovation. According to statutes, the House of Commons at this day conducts its business in privacy. There is still unrepealed a standing order forbidding the presence of strangers at debates. Up to the year 1875 any member casually observing "I spy strangers," would lead to peremptory clearing of the galleries. In the Session of that year happened Mr. Biggar's famous escape, when, observing the Prince of

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Wales in the gallery over the clock, he "spied strangers," and the Heir Apparent, the nobility in the gallery by his side, and the gentry on the benches behind, were straightway driven forth. Shortly after the standing order was amended, and strangers are no longer at the mercy of an individual member.

At a time when strangers were formally prohibited from attendance on debates, a compromise was effected whereby, whilst their presence was winked at, they were obliged to quit when the House was cleared for a division. This also, in course of time, became modified, till the application of the order was confined to the few strangers who obtained the privileged seats under the gallery on the floor of the House. When the Speaker puts the question and a division is challenged, he, up to Easter in the present Session, wound up the formula with the command, "Strangers will withdraw." Thereupon the strangers under the gallery trooped out, and were conducted across the lobby into the corridor beyond, where they waited till the division was over. As on critical occasions the division is the most picturesque and dramatic feature of a debate, the advantage of the seats under the gallery was considerably handicapped.

The reason for the injunction was plain enough. Strangers seated in this part of the House might easily, whether by accident or design, join the throng of members trooping into the division lobby. What would happen when they reached the wicket where the clerks stand ticking off names can only be surmised, since there is no record of such catastrophe having happened. But I have personal recollection of at least two instances where strangers, admitted past the doorkeepers with orders for seats under the gallery, have strayed into the House itself. In one case, during debate on a liquor traffic Bill, two gentlemen connected with the Trade, armed with orders for seats under the gallery, instead of turning to the right or left when they had passed the doorkeepers, pressed straight forward, entered by the glass door, and took their seats below the gangway, almost under the nose of the Serjeant-at-Arms. There they sat, and listened to the debate with great comfort. They might have sat it out but for the accident of a division.



"A Splotch of Red from West Ham."

They did not know exactly what to do when, on the question being put, members began to troop off to the right or left. Their hesitation betrayed them, and they were bundled out with alarming precipitancy.

Another case happened in the Session of 1889, during debate on the Tithe Rent-charge Bill, in charge of Mr. Henry Matthews, then Home Secretary. A stranger under the gallery, much interested in the subject, found a difficulty in catching all the Home Secretary's remarks. Immediately before him was a half-empty cushioned bench, in many ways more convenient than the one to which he had been conducted. He accordingly climbed over the rail before him, stepped down into the House itself, and was proceeding to take his seat before he had taken the oath and without the preliminary of election. His manner of approach attracted attention. A messenger seized him and ran him out. Brought before the Serjeant-at-Arms, he explained that, never having been in the House before, he was ignorant of the division of localities. He wanted to hear Mr. Matthews, and finding a difficulty where he sat, thought he would just step down and take a seat a little nearer.

A PEER
ON THE
TREASURY
BENCH.

A member of the present Cabinet tells me he remembers an occasion when a stranger was discovered seated on the Treasury Bench itself. He had walked boldly in, strolled up the floor, and settled himself in the corner seat by the gangway at the end of the Treasury Bench. (Here is the upright post against which Lord Kingsborough, when he was still with us as Lord Advocate, used to lean his back, and, so the ribald rumour went, invoke blessings on the head of the Duke of Argyll.) After sitting for a while, listening to the member on his legs, he leaned over to the Minister close on his left hand, and in a loud whisper said: "When is Derby going to speak?"

It turned out that he was a peer of the United Kingdom, who had never visited Westminster since he succeeded to the peerage. Hearing that Lord Derby, at the time

leading the Opposition in the Lords, was expected to make a big speech, he thought he would just look in. Following the stream he, being in the octagon hall, turned to the left instead of the right, and so entered the inner lobby of the House of Commons. Mention of his name to the doorkeeper would pass him on the supposition that he was going to the Peers' Gallery. With the glass door before him giving access to the floor of the House, the rest was easy.



"AWAY WITH HIM."

ANOTHER
PROP OF
THE CON-
STITUTION
WITH-
DRAWN.

Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who in other matters besides those relating to the Parks is pos-
sessed of most

unofficial notions as to the right of the public to consideration, lent a sympathetic ear to complaints of the inconvenience of strangers turned out from below the gallery whenever a division was called. Possibly representations on the subject were the more potent by reason of the fact that this is the part of the House where seats are found for the private secretaries of Ministers and the heads of departments concerned in debates going forward. However it be, the First

Commissioner had the seats fenced off from the House by a high rail, and then moved the repeal of the standing order which requires strangers to withdraw from these seats when the House is cleared for a division.

"Dear Mr. Lucy," writes Mr. John A. Bright, "I see you say in THE STRAND MAGAZINE that my father wore a Windsor, or Ministerial, uniform, but not a sword. He never wore a uniform, but was allowed by the Queen to wear a plain velvet suit with black buttons, which I now have."

To the vulgar mind it is, save as a matter of taste and suitability, a very small matter whether a man wears a Windsor uniform or a velvet suit. But this concession, a grave matter at a Court still dominated by German ideas of the sanctity of uniform, testifies to the kindly thoughtfulness of the Queen, and to her personal admiration for a statesman who, through a long period of his life, was anathema to good Conservatives.

Incidentally it placed the President of the Board of Trade of 1868 at a considerable advantage over his colleagues. The ordinary Ministerial dress, a semi-military uniform, the origin of which tradition assigns to the late Prince Consort, is exceedingly uncomfortable on hot summer nights. The velvet suit, which in modified form Mr. Bright wore, is built on the lines of the dress of the well-born Englishmen about the time of Sir Roger de Coverley. No handsomer dress is permitted to Englishmen than this velvet suit, with its ruffles at the wrist and front, its knee-breeches, its silk stockings, and its shoes with silver buckles.

Amongst Ministers it is still worn by the Attorney-General, and pertains on State occasions to learned gentlemen who have filled that high office. Sir Richard Webster, Attorney-General in the late Government, has the further advantage of wearing with his Court suit the Ribbon and Order of the K.C.M.G., bestowed upon him in recognition of his services at the Behring Sea Arbitration. The Ribbon, Saxon blue with a scarlet stripe, is particularly effective over the black velvet, whilst the motto of the Order, *Auspiciis melioris ævi*, comforts an ex-Minister as he paces the wilderness of Opposition.

Looking, the other day, over some old letters, I came upon a curious incident mentioned in a letter from Dr. Lyon Playfair, now Lord Playfair. It is dated July, 1882, at which time he was Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons. He mentions that he is "much engaged upon the highly respectable journal of 'Ways and Means,' into which a grower of champagne asks me to insert a commendatory notice of his vintage." This communication was probably accompanied by a proposal to furnish the Chairman of Committees with opportunities of personally verifying the excellence of the

brand. On that point there is no testimony forthcoming. But the incident is instructive, as showing the view taken in foreign parts of our Parliamentary customs.

If he has kept them, Lord Playfair must have a rare selection of quaint letters addressed to him in his varied public capacities. About six years ago he delivered in various parts of the country a series of valuable lectures on some bearings of Free Trade. These lectures brought him many letters from the unemployed. Some of the writers were convinced that their lamentable condition was directly due to the wide employment of machinery. One proposed that the armies of Europe might well be used for the purpose of a universal smashing up of machinery. Another suggested to Sir Lyon the organization of a European association for the destruction of machinery, of which he was to be the president.

The picture of Lord Playfair, probably on a coal-black charger, leading the armies of Europe in a raid upon miscellaneous machinery, appeals to the imagination with winning force.



SIR RICHARD WEBSTER.



LORD PLAYFAIR.

A YOUNG
PARLIAM-
ENTARY
HAND.

It is fortunate for the House of Commons that the withdrawal from its precincts of Mr. Gladstone sees the growth and advance to prominence of Mr.

Arthur Balfour. Mr. Gladstone, among his many claims to the esteem of the House of Commons, did more than anyone else to maintain its antique tone of personal courtesy and high breeding. Mr. Balfour is not much more than half the age Mr. Gladstone had reached at the time of his retirement from the Parliamentary scene, yet he has, in degree not possessed by any other member, that graceful and dignified manner, that instinctive reverence for the old traditions of the House of Commons, which marked Mr. Gladstone from first to last. This is a precious possession the House of Commons cherishes as something quite apart from politics. The peculiar gift is undefinable, but men who know the House of Commons intimately will recognise its inheritance by Mr. Balfour, and will possibly be able to name more than one prominent quarter in which otherwise supreme Parliamentary talents are marred by its conspicuous lack.

THE OLD
PARLIAM-
ENTARY
HAND.

Mr. Gladstone, whilst he was yet with us, carried his reverence for the traditions of the House of Commons to extreme lengths, even in small matters. A few Sessions ago, he being at the time Prime Minister, a by-election was won in circumstances that created much jubilation in the Liberal camp. The new member, approaching to take the oath and his seat, was hailed with boisterous cheers. When he passed between the Treasury Bench and the table on which the roll of Parliament lay, one or two members effusively shook hands with him.

Mr. Gladstone made no sign, but took an early opportunity after the new member had taken his seat privately to express to the Speaker his regret that the new comer should, with whatever kindly intent, have been waylaid on his progress towards the Chair. His view was that till a new member has been presented to the Speaker, and has by him been welcomed, it is indecorous for anyone to interpose with friendly shake of hand. It is probable that hint of this matter was passed along the Treasury Bench, for a practice that at one time seemed established is intermitted, and to-day Ministers refrain from shaking hands with a new recruit on his way to be presented to the Speaker.

Once upon a time there used to be published at the close of each Parliamentary Session a volume setting forth in detail the attendances of members upon divisions. The Buff Book, as it was called from the colour of its binding, was much in use at contested

elections, where it was possible to show that a member offering himself for re-election was in respect of attendance on his duties no better than he should be. The Buff Book did not turn out a financial success, and to the secret relief of many members its publication was discontinued.

For Her Majesty's Ministers such a record is to this day diligently kept. Every week occupants of the Treasury Bench receive from the Whip's office a statement showing the number of times they have been present at divisions, the number of their absences, and the exact relative position in which they stand on the roll of honour or of dishonour. There are cases in which a Minister, usually one of the Whips, has taken part in every division of a Session. Several come within measurable distance of achieving this high distinction. On the whole, the weekly return acts as an incentive. But there are cases where its effect is deterrent. When a Minister, through illness or accident, gets altogether out of the running, he is prone to assume an attitude of desperation and withdraw from the competition.

Cardinal Vaughan has visited the lobby of the House of Commons CARDINALS. once or twice this Session, but is by no means so constant in his

attendance as was his predecessor's wont. More especially during the height of the Irish fight under the captaincy of Mr. Parnell, the spare figure of Cardinal Manning, with his pinched, bloodless, intellectual features, was as familiar in the lobby as that of the average member. Standing apart, usually in the neighbourhood of the passage by the Bill Office, he held earnest conversation with a succession of Irish members. I remember the sensation created one night in the crowded lobby when a burly, devout Irish member, now

no more, popped down on one knee and kissed the ring on the hand extended to him with quite other intent by the Cardinal.



CARDINAL VAUGHAN.

In personal appearance Cardinal Vaughan is wholly different from Mr. Gladstone's college companion of more than sixty years ago. One never saw Cardinal Manning without recalling a remark dropped by the Cardinal in *Lothair*. "I never eat and I never drink," said the prelate, for whose characteristics Mr. Disraeli was understood to have drawn upon a study at hand in London. Cardinal Vaughan does not look at all of that way of thinking.

THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is never permitted to leave the island even for a day until certain dignitaries, including the Lord Chancellor, are solemnly sworn in to act in commission during his absence. This is a detail of constitutional law familiar to the public, since the swearing-in of the commission is regularly recorded in the Dublin papers. The Lord High Chancellor of England has patiently to bear even a harder lot without assurance of the silent sympathy of the nation. During his term of office he is not permitted to leave the kingdom. If he makes holiday, he must choose a locality somewhere within the boundaries of the island.

THE GREAT SEAL. The reason for this restriction is that whenever the Lord Chancellor goes he must carry with him the Great Seal, and that is not to be trusted out of the country. This precious insignia of authority really consists of a pair of dies made in silver. When necessity arises for affixing the Great Seal of England to any document the dies are closed, melted wax is poured in,



THE LATE CARDINAL MANNING.

and, opened in due season, the Great Seal is found ready for attachment. It is six inches in diameter and three-quarters of an inch thick. The pair of dies now in use date from the accession of Her Majesty. On her death they will be cut into pieces and deposited with a long list of others in the Tower.

One Great Seal is lacking to the collection. It belonged to the reign of James II. That estimable monarch, fleeing before the thunder of the Great Revolution, dropped the Seal into the Thames. Another original Great Seal missing is that which, in the reign of George III, was temporarily in the custody of Lord Thurlow. The Lord Chancellor of those days lived in the now unaristocratic quarter of Great Ormond Street. On the 24th of March, 1784, thieves broke in upon the Lord Chancellor's house and stole away the Great Seal. It probably went into the melting-pot. Certainly, it was never seen again. It so happened that Parliament had to be dissolved on the next day, which made the incident peculiarly embarrassing. The silversmith was promptly put to work, and the dies of a new Great Seal were made in time for use in connection with the ceremony of Dissolution.

HOME SECRETARY: OLD TYPE AND NEW.

Amongst more substantial claims to distinction the late Lord Aberdare was, in the matter of family name, endowed with embarrassment of riches. His father passed a long life apparently in a state of uncertainty as to whether he should continue under the name he happened to bear at the moment, or whether he should look for another. When he was born, his patronymic was Knight. When he came to man's estate, Mr. Knight changed his name to Bruce. Thirty-two years later he called himself Pryce, and at the time of his death was known as Mr. John Bruce Pryce. When his second son, Henry, was in a position to choose his own name, he called himself plain Bruce. The family peculiarity was more happily developed in his case, since



A PRISONER OF STATE.

he worked his way up to a peerage and died Lord Aberdare.

To recall the time when Mr. Bruce was Home Secretary, and roused the man in the street against Mr. Gladstone's Government by his introduction of the Licensing Acts, seems a page of history almost as remote as a chapter of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Mr. Bruce, if he now sat in the House of Commons for Renfrewshire or elsewhere, would have no more chance of being made Home Secretary than he would of being nominated for the Primacy. The type is changed from Henry Austin Bruce to that of Herbert Henry Asquith. Yet it is only twenty-seven years come the 9th of December that Mr. Gladstone, then in the prime of manhood, as age is reckoned with him, attended Her Majesty in Privy Council and was sworn in First Lord of the Treasury.

The room to-day is haunted by the ghosts of the majority who were on that occasion assembled. Lord Granville received the seals of office as Secretary for the Colonies; Lord Clarendon was Foreign Secretary; Mr. Cardwell was Secretary of State for War; Mr. Bruce, Home Secretary; Mr. Forster, Vice-President of the Council; Mr. Chichester Fortescue, Chief Secretary for Ireland; Mr. Lowe, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Layard was First Commissioner of Works, and Sir William Page Wood, afterwards Lord Hatherley, was Lord Chancellor. Mr. Bright, overcoming his repugnance to office, became, at Mr. Gladstone's urgent request, President of the Board of Trade. All, all are gone, the once familiar faces. Of

others present at this historic gathering only three in addition to the Chief are with us to-day, and for each a great deal has happened since then. On this 9th of December, 1868, the Duke of Argyll was handed the seals of the India Office, Lord Hartington became Postmaster-General, and Mr. Childers First Lord of the Admiralty.

A
HAUNTED
MAN.

"How oft to-night," said Friar Laurence, in *Romeo and Juliet*, "have my old feet stumbled at graves." Mr. Gladstone, having lived longer than most men, and had a wider range of acquaintance than any, can hardly move through the passages of a day without his feet stumbling at the grave of a friend. If all the men he has personally known before and since Henry Newman were gathered, say, in Westminster Abbey—if, indeed, the

fullest limits of its walls would hold the multitude—what a varied and illustrious throng the ancient rafters would cover! Some of them even now sleep beneath the storied pavement. These and others of the glorious crowd being dead, yet speak through written records, in which they convey the impression created in their minds by Mr. Gladstone, they having known him at various phases of his life from the age of twenty to that of seventy. Monthly, almost weekly, the printing press pours forth autobiographies, recollections, remains, or biographies of more or less eminent men of the half century. Turning over the pages, Mr. Gladstone rarely fails to find himself for a moment face to face with his dead self at various stages of his long career—his self portrayed with the frankness with which we are all discussed behind our backs.



HOME SECRETARIES: PAST AND PRESENT.